

ENVIRONMENT NEWS RELEASE

From the Department
of the Environment

RATE RELIEF FOR CHARITIES & NON-PROFIT MAKING BODIES

Local authorities are being encouraged to give rate relief to charities and non-profit making organisations such as sports clubs.

Christopher Chope, Parliamentary Under-Secretary at the Department of the Environment said today:

'Many charities and non-profit making bodies make a valuable contribution to local communities and rate relief is one way authorities can acknowledge this.'

The Department of the Environment and the Welsh Office today issued guidance to local authorities on the granting of discretionary rate relief. Mr Chope said:

'When the new non-domestic rating system starts in April next year authorities will be able to grant up to 100 per cent rate relief to charities and non-profit making organisations such as sports clubs.'

'We have already told them that they can increase, from 50 per cent to 75 per cent, the amount of money they are entitled to offset against their payments into the non-domestic rate pool to encourage authorities to grant relief.'

'Unfortunately there have been cases in the past where local authorities have refused to grant rate relief even to the most deserving cases. The Government, during the passage of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, gave a commitment to remind authorities of their powers in this regard.'

'The guidance is not intended to be a rigid set of rules. It contains criteria based on good practice, which I hope authorities will use as an aid to their decision making.'

'It will also be a useful reference document for charities and organisations if their local authority adopts a particularly uncharitable policy on relief.'

Contact Chris Hudson for more details about the Practice Note.

Subscriptions & Fixture Books

Unfortunately Banks in some cases have not quoted the name of the person paying by standing order, although they have credited our account.

If you have paid by this method and have not yet received your membership card (and Fixture Book if you are a tournament player), please let Brian Macmillan know.

We believe also that a number of Fixture Books went astray in the Post. If you are entitled to a copy but have not yet received one, please contact Brian.

NATIONAL JUNIOR SQUADS 1990

From John McCullough

The following have been selected for the two squads:

Under-18

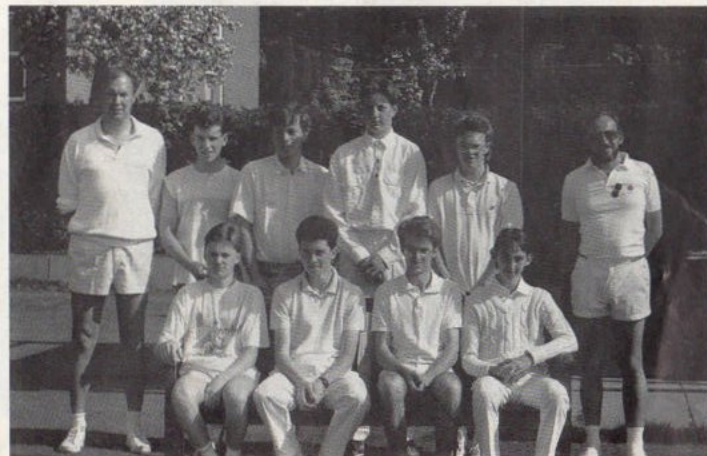
N. Currie	Colstons Girls & Bristol
E. Duckworth	Marlwood S & Bristol
A. Leggate	Nailsea S. & Nailsea
D. Lilley	Nailsea S. & Nailsea
R. Probyn	Wrekin College
D. Reckie	Manchester G.S.
A. Saurin	Q.E.G.S. & Southport
J. Simon	Wrekin College

Coaches: Andrew Bennet, John McCullough

Under-21

I. Burridge	Colchester GS & Colchester
C. Clarke	QEGS & Southport
R. Collighan	QEGS & Southport
R. Fulford	Colchester GS & Durham Univ.
C. Haslam	Southport
D. Maugham	Bowdon
D. McCormick	QEGS & Southport
M. Saurin	QEGS & Southport

Coach: Keith Aiton.



The 1989 Under-18 Squad with their coaches. Back (L to R): John McCullough, Richard Harding, Chris Ross, Chris Haslam, David Thatcher, and Andrew Bennet. Front: Andrew Saurin, Ian Burridge, Graham Pearson, and Alex Leggate.

GRANTS AND LOANS

From John McCullough, Chairman CA Development Committee.

I thought it would be useful to provide a brief summary of current CA policy on Grants and Loans for Clubs.

GRANTS

Two types of grants are available:

1. Major grants to Clubs expanding to four (full) lawn size. Refer to the article on page 7 of Issue No. 208. Initial enquiries should be directed to the Chairman of the Development Committee. If, after initial discussions and (probably) a visit from the Chairman or Chris Hudson, the Club decides to pursue an application, supporting evidence will be requested. This will include such documents as a copy of the Club constitution, copies of the two most recent annual accounts, details of lease, fund raising etc.

2. £50 'starter' grants. A very limited number of such grants are available to help fund publicity to launch new clubs. Applications should be made through the Secretary of your local Federation.

LOANS

Loans are available to help fund the provision of new courts, the upgrading of existing courts or the provision of off-lawn facilities. Refer to the articles on page 12 of Issue No. 181 and page 18 of Issue No. 185. Note

that the grant policy referred to in the former article no longer applies. Applications should be sent to the Chairman of the Development Committee in the first instance, although some applications may be referred to the Finance and General Purposes Committee. Several loans of £500 have been made in recent years. (Editor's Note: Xerox copies of the above articles are available from Chris Hudson if required - Tel: 0270-820296.)

FOUR-LAWN FUND

From John McCullough

The current total in the 'Four-Lawn' Fund is £1850. Since the article about the Fund appeared in Issue No. 208, page 7, the following donations have been gratefully received.

£10 or over
John McCullough; Chris Hudson.
£100 or over
Jim Townsend.

The Croquet Association has allocated £450 for the Four-Lawn Fund in its 1990 budget.

Congratulations to Under-21 squad members Robert Fulford and Mark Saurin for helping to bring the MacRobertson Shield back to Britain and Ireland.

Congratulations to Ian Burridge and Chris Haslam who have graduated from the Under-18 squad and to Dan McCormick who jumps straight into the Under-21's.

It is all change in the Under-18's this year. Alex Leggate is the only member of last year's squad remaining. Adrian Saurin follows his brothers Mark and Andrew into the Junior squad, bringing the QEGS (Blackburn) contingent to five in all. Further tribute to their coach Andrew Bennet.

The South West is well represented in the Under-18's this year. Edward Duckworth, twice winner of the Bristol handicap Weekend, sprang to prominence as a member of the Bristol team which won the First National Short Croquet Team Championship in 1986. David Lilley is the current National Short Croquet individual champion. Special congratulations are due to Nicola Currie, the first representative of the fairer sex in a National Junior squad. Nicola is an all-round sportswoman who lists netball, hockey, athletics, riding and jet-skiing among her other accomplishments.

Eddie Roberts at Wrekin College is obviously one of the unsung heroes of croquet coaching, for two of his pupils have made the squad. They were in the winning team in last year's National Handicap Schools Tournament. Dan Kelly's good work at Manchester GS also gets its recognition as we welcome David Reckie to the squad.

ALTERATIONS TO THE 1990 FIXTURES BOOK

From Don Gaunt

The following alterations should be noted to the information provided in the 1990 Fixture Book.

The Surbiton W/E A (26th-28th May) is moved to 9th-10th June.

The Crawley W/E A (8th-9th September) is moved to 21st-22nd June.

Cheques to Southwick Club should be made out to 'The Sussex County Croquet Club, omitting 'Lawn Tennis'.

After page 36, add one (1) to each page reference in the calendar lists. **Budleigh Salterton**. August week tournament. Entry fee for Doubles is £5.

Selectors Weekend. Dates shown incorrectly as 14th-16th September on page 12. Should be 7th-9th as shown in calendar.

CA Council has ruled that, in future years, changes of date for fixtures after the fixture book is published will be charged at advertising rate if the club requires notice in 'Croquet'.

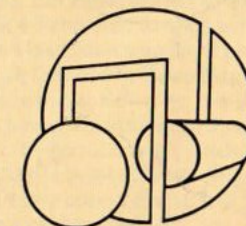
CROQUET



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Chairman's Report
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Your Letters

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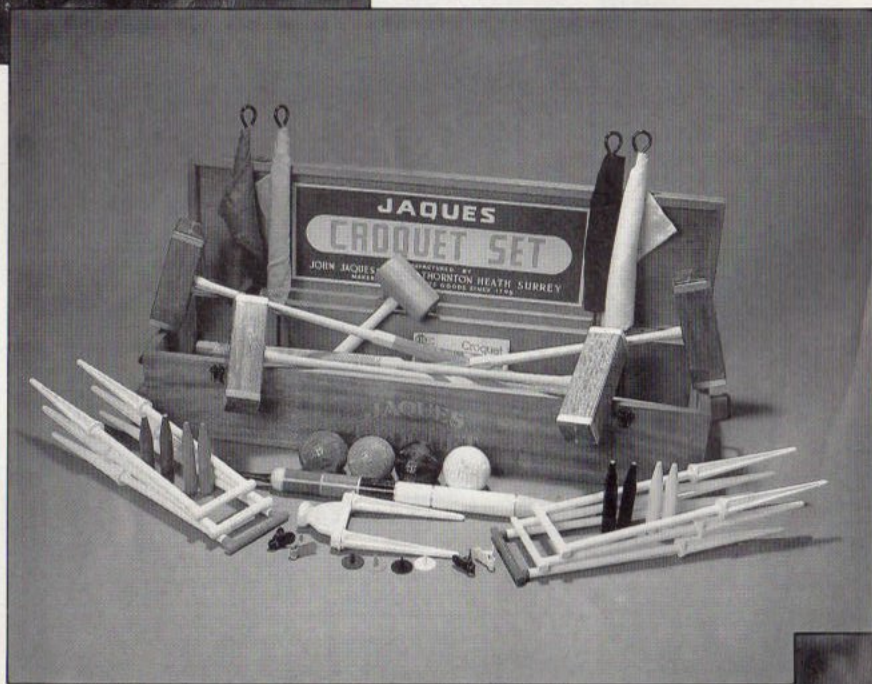
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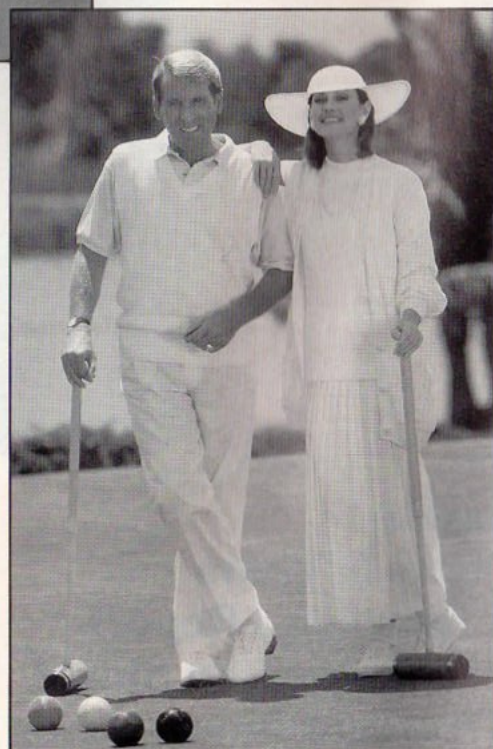
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CROQUET

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Contributions (except tournament reports and results) and photographs (preferably black and white) should be sent to the Editor. They are most welcome and will be acknowledged when published.

Tournament results and reports to be sent direct, within 7 days of completion of the tournament, to the Secretary of the CA. All correspondence about non-delivery of 'Croquet', changes of address, telephone numbers, handicaps or officials should be sent to the CA Secretary and **not** to the Editor.

Photographs in this issue by: Hugh Dunsterville, Tony Garner, Hamish Hall, Chris Hudson, Chris Irwin, L. Kennedy, Deborah Latham, John McCullough, Ian McDiarmid, and John Williams (Photo Journalist).

Cover photo: No wasting time between shots so far as Stephen Mulliner is concerned! He won his match against Bob Jackson by 2 games to nil in just over 2 hours on the final day of the New Zealand Test. His report of the two games is on pages 15 and 16 of this issue.

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Coaching	Bill Lamb
Features	Allen Parker
Pictures	Chris Hudson
Advertising	Brian Bucknall

Annual Subscription Rate **£12.00**

MacRobertson Shield

MacROBERTSON TOUR 1990

MANAGER'S REPORT

The 1990 tour always promised to be rather special. The competing countries had agreed a new, shortened format featuring three 6-day tests rather than nine 3-day tests. The team leaving these shores did so under the banner of Great Britain & Ireland for the first time, contained three members under the age of 24 and faced the apparently awesome task of lifting the trophy from the Kiwis on their home territory. Lastly, but by no means least, GB&I had taken a psychological edge by appointing Keith Aiton as Official Coach. This caused a pleasing degree of consternation as neither of the other teams had thought of doing it.

The 1982 tour to Australia had been an immensely happy tour, consisting basically of six friends (plus Sarah Mulliner) of much the same age group. There were worries that the new team consisting of three youths, three veterans (plus Chris Irwin) and a Coach might not fit so well together. In the event, the age problem was no problem at all. The junior element was perfectly happy pursuing burgers, the Irwins and your reporter formed a dining club to take advantage of the very good value New Zealand offers to the travelling gourmand and the Captain and Coach made an in-depth study of the more interesting metropolitan evening facilities. Their report is expected shortly.

NZ test, the choice of Steve as his replacement was not a surprise. The bad news was that Mark Avery badly sprained his left ankle when on a sightseeing trip to Napier and had to miss the second representative match. This injury undoubtedly affected his play to an extent, although he bravely shrugged it off.

The playing conditions were reasonably easy in Auckland and only a little more demanding in Hamilton and Napier. Christchurch was quite different and our morning's practice two days before the test was invaluable. Narrow, accurately set hoops in unyielding ground make for a real test of control and the main theme of captain and coach alike was to concentrate on completing 4-ball breaks. This proved to be excellent advice and only a handful of games failed to feature a clutch of simple errors. With the exception of day 2, the weather was very hot and usually windy. The courts began each day at moderate pace and with a hint of 'give', hardened and speeded up from 11am to 3.30pm, and then slowed down into the evening. They were an excellent choice for such a vital Test Match and NZCC are to be congratulated.

The six-day format proved to be a fine test of two well-matched teams. The tension in the third Test built up steadily as the balance swung first one way



The GB&I team. Back (L to R): Robert Fulford, Mark Saurin, Stephen Mulliner, Keith Aiton (Coach), Colin Irwin, and Mark Avery. Front: David Openshaw (Captain) with the MacRobertson Shield.

The play got off to an excellent start with the 18-3 win against Australia although the team were showing no signs of complacency when I arrived. They all felt that GB&I had played solidly rather than brilliantly, that Australia's lack of best-of-three experience had been exposed in the closer finishes and that the Kiwis would be a very different proposition. The representative games were basically satisfactory (12-3 against New Zealand 'B' and 8-1 against Junior New Zealand) although Steve Jones (ex-Cheltenham) showed some great form. Although we did not expect the news that Roger Murfitt had decided to step down for the GB&I v

and then the other. At lunch on day 2, GB&I led 2-1 and were 1-0 up in all four singles. There was talk of leading 6-1 but the Kiwis rallied to take two singles to make it 4-3 and then struck hard on day 3 to establish a 6-4 lead. Lunch on day 4 proved to be their zenith as they led in three singles and Hogan soon made it 7-4. However, the decisive GB&I surge then began which took the score to 7-7 and then 10-7 by the end of day 5. The shout that greeted Mark Avery's peg-out from 14 yards to clinch a famous victory against Hogan and Jackson could have been heard a mile away.

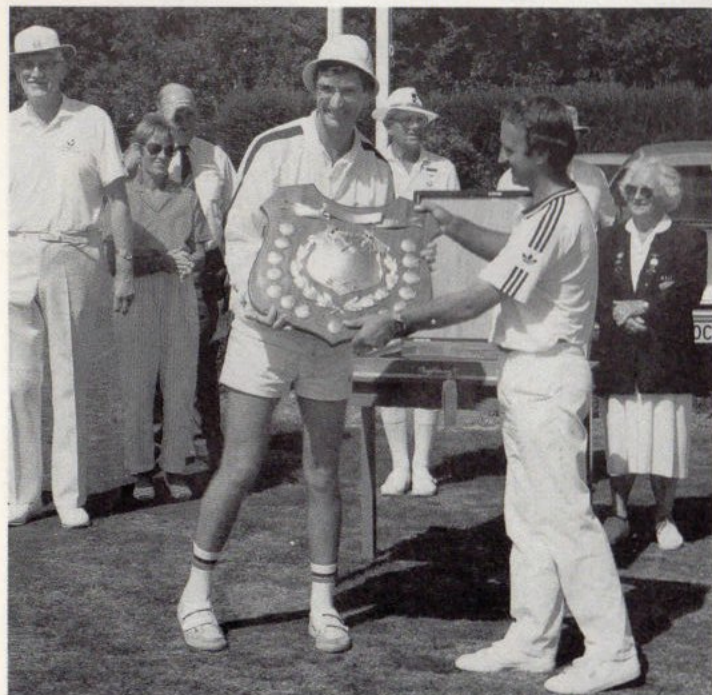
The final day imposed far more tension on GB&I

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MacRobertson Shield

than on New Zealand. Whitewashes had occurred on two of the five previous days and the possibility of an unutterably embarrassing 4-0 flop to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory ensured that we breakfasted soberly on that Friday morning. As it happened, your reporter was on song and was privileged to score the vital point shortly after noon so we could all relax a little before winding up the day with a satisfying 12-9 victory.

Why did GB&I win? The main reason is probably the natural advantage that a happy and effective touring side has over home-based opposition. We were utterly focussed on the business of playing winning croquet. Captain and coach never lost sight of the basics. We all practised as hard as necessary. NZ were not quite the force they have been in the last few years and the sudden elevation of Steve Jones exposed him to the pressures of representing his country for the first time.



David Openshaw receives the MacRobertson Shield from John Prince, New Zealand's Captain, after the Christchurch Test.

Although every member of the 'British Lions' (as we were described by a dignitary at the presentation) contributed hugely to the effort, both in points and unwavering physical presence after their games had ended, the stalwart figure of Colin Irwin deserves special mention. Never ruffled, absolutely unyielding and a deadly last shot, Colin epitomised the difference between the two teams and was only a peg-out away from a well-deserved clean sweep.

Robert Fulford, another sturdy figure, and Mark Saurin (known inevitably as Mark 2) enhanced their reputations considerably and emphasised the importance of developing young stars for the future.

Robert won two excellent singles matches and two doubles matches and went on to reach the final of the NZ Open Championship. Armed with excellent tactics and deadly shooting, he can plan for the 1990 World Championship in earnest. David Openshaw wore the cares of captaincy lightly and, despite a dismal first day, showed his remarkable resilience yet again. Mark Avery has now faced and survived the pressures of playing at first string for his country. Despite his injury, he came close to defeating Jackson and applied the coup de grace to the top NZ pair in the doubles. Your reporter started well then lost 5 straight games before winning the last four. Hogan's name is in my little book.

It would be wrong to end without a list of thanks. The NZCC from the President, Roger Murfitt, downwards did everything in their power to make everything go smoothly. At the risk of omitting equally worthy persons, we owe particular thanks to

David Curtis, the Test Manager at all three venues, to Ashley Heenan and Jean Corrie and their squad of referees (almost all of whom are first-class players in their own right) and to the club members who provided food and drink. On the home side, William Prichard gave superb service with a most professional performance in the first Test against Australia. Keith Aiton proved how useful a thoughtful and unobtrusive coach can be and has almost certainly started a trend. Last but not least, we greatly appreciated the enthusiastic and vocal support of Chris Irwin, Debbie Cornelius, Annabel McDiarmid, Richard Hilditch (official spy), Robert Prichard and Phil Cordingley.

STEPHEN MULLINER

Laws

LAWS MEETING

Report by Stephen Mulliner

A meeting of Laws Committee representatives from the Australian Croquet Association, the New Zealand Croquet Council and the Croquet Association was held in Christchurch on 27th January 1990 to discuss possible changes to the Laws and Regulations.

The principal conclusions of the meeting were;

1. Future Laws changes should be restricted to a minimum. The Laws book published by the CA and used in Australia and the USA should not be reprinted more than once every five years. It was recognised that, although the Laws covered most situations adequately, there would inevitably be occasions when more than one interpretation might arise. Current policy, which attempts to devise new wording to cope with every suggested ambiguity, carries the risk that it will create new problems as quickly as it resolves old ones.
2. Accordingly, the three governing bodies will henceforth jointly authorise the publication of Official Rulings which will set out the official interpretation of those laws and situations that give rise to doubt. These rulings will have the force of law and will be published initially in croquet magazines and then will be available in collected form from the governing bodies. It should be understood that the Rules of the CA already give a nominee of the CA Council (by tradition the Laws Committee Chairman) the power to make such rulings. The new agreement ensures that this power and the similar

powers vested in the other governing bodies will be used uniformly.

3. It will still remain possible for the Laws to be amended at any time if this is necessary. Such changes will be implemented using existing procedure. Between reprints, amendment slips will be supplied for the CA Laws Book while the NZCC will be able to take advantage of the incorporation of the Laws in the annual publication of their Year-Book.

4. The occasion of the next edition of the CA Laws Book (probably in 1994) will provide an opportunity to elevate some of the Official Rulings to the status of Law changes. The gap between new editions will be desirable respite in which the adequacy and good sense of new rulings can be tested by experience.

5. The Regulations should be used more extensively to cater for the special needs of particular tournaments. In particular, within reasonable limits imposed by the governing bodies, it should be possible to add special laws or disapply existing laws when appropriate to do so.

6. In accordance with (3) above, it is proposed to introduce changes to modify the time limits for replacing balls in Laws 23 and 24 and to extend the limits of claims in Laws 28(a) and 35. These changes have yet to be considered by the CA Council and, if approved, will be published in the July edition of Croquet with a view to becoming effective for the 1991 season. Australia and New Zealand hope to introduce the changes in the 1990/91 season.

Affiliate Membership

from Chris Hudson

Details of the new grade of 'Affiliate' are given on page 26 of this issue.

The introduction of this new grade will enable all members of registered clubs to become affiliate members of the Croquet Association automatically. This will be achieved purely voluntarily, and without any additional costs to the clubs or their members.

All a club has to do to take advantage of this scheme is to send the Croquet Association a list of its members and their addresses, and the relevant club registration fee.

Affiliates will initially have a number of privileges that we hope will gradually be extended as membership of the Association grows. This coming season they will receive free or discounted entry to venues staging selected CA events, and they will be eligible to enter the National Golf Croquet Cups tournament listed in the CA Calendar Fixtures, previously confined to Associates.

Each Affiliate will receive a membership card on enrolment, and

an introductory copy of 'Croquet News'. In later issues this season, we hope to announce a number of 'Special Offers' for Affiliates on CA products, whilst at the same time, maintaining preferential treatment for Associates.

Registered Clubs whose members are affiliated will be able to take advantage of Public Liability Insurance offered through the Croquet Association, as the sport's governing body. Many clubs at present are paying a premium of £50 or more for Public Liability Insurance. Others are not insured. The cost for this insurance through the CA's master policy is £20 per annum, which for many clubs could represent a considerable annual saving.

'Croquet News', published 4 times a year, is available to Affiliates at an annual subscription of £1.75 (cover price £2.00). Clubs wishing to have 'Croquet News' mailed direct to their affiliated members should send the relevant subscriptions to the CA.

Building for the Future

By Martin Murray

In the second of the two years of my term as Chairman there have been two events which I would highlight as of the greatest significance, and neither of which I had anticipated when my term began. The first of these was the successful staging of the first World Croquet Championship at Hurlingham last July, and the second was the victory of Great Britain and Ireland team in the MacRobertson Shield contest in New Zealand in January. That both of these were international events is evidence of the importance that international affairs have taken in the life of the Association. This is partly the result of the increased ease and availability of air travel, partly a consequence of the greatly increased popularity of the game in the U.S.A., but the staging of the World Championship, and the transport of our team to New Zealand, were both made possible through the generosity of our sponsors, Continental Airlines. Other significant international events in 1989-90 were the second contest for the Solomon Trophy, which Great Britain and Ireland retained, and the inaugural meeting of the World Croquet Federation at Hurlingham.

Other matters which assumed importance in Council's affairs during the year were more concerned with planning for the future. I am sure all associates will share my regret that Brian Macmillan is retiring, and will join me in thanking him for the tremendous service he has given to the Association over the last seven years. I hope however that they will also agree with me that Council's policy

of having a fixed retirement age is a sound one. The days when the position of secretary was a gentle and leisurely occupation have long since gone, and it is essential that we find a long term successor to Brian as soon as possible. As I write this no appointment has been made, but the selection process has demonstrated both the importance of the position for the Association, and the difficulty of securing the services of a suitable person within the limits of the Association's budget.

Another item of forward planning that has taken an increasing part of Council's attention in the last months has been the preparation of a forward plan for 1991-1994, which will form the basis of our application to the Sports Council for a renewal of our grant. Chris Hudson, our National Development Officer, has undertaken the bulk of the work in this matter, and I am confident that the success he had on two previous occasions will be repeated. Chris explained at the Club Conference that the basic Sports Council philosophy behind grant aid to governing bodies is that they are looking to provide a smaller proportion of expenditure in the form of grant aid, but that the actual value of the grant can increase if our turnover increases. This has consistently been the case over the last few years, so the prospects for the next four years look good. The three main objectives that we have stated in the plan are to increase the number of 'Regional Competition Venues', four-lawn or larger clubs capable of holding major tournaments, expanding our coaching activities, an area where croquet has traditionally been weak, and expanding our membership. A major component of the latter aim is the new 'Affiliate Membership' scheme, which is intended to bring all members of registered clubs into membership of the Association in a way that gives worthwhile benefits to them and their clubs and costs little more than the existing registration fee.

One factor that we shall be emphasising in the application, and a matter which I mentioned in my report last year, is the difficulty of sustaining the increased level of activity by the Association on the basis of volunteer labour alone. We have received indications from the Sports Council that they may be prepared to support a limited number of part-time paid appointments, and we are looking for paid help of this kind to support such essential activities as regional development, preparation of the fixture book, financial control, etc. Over my years on Council I have come to discover how difficult it is, with family and career commitments, to fulfil a voluntary post with the required efficiency, and I realise that the supply of retired volunteers



Martin Murray.

with the necessary expertise and enthusiasm (and idealism to work unpaid) is also limited.

I also understand, and the evidence was on show at the Club Conference, how much croquet depends for its survival on the work of volunteers in the clubs. When Council is looking for volunteers we often look at those we know who do such good work in the clubs, but obviously their time is just as limited, and the jobs they do in the clubs are just as important as the central activities of the Council.

In an annual report, and even more so in a final report at the end of a term of office, it is a pleasant, but difficult, task to thank all those who have given support. Difficult, because I know that any attempt to name all

Chairman's Report

such individuals would not only take more space than I have available, but also inevitably disappoint people by forgetting them, pleasant because it is only through the help of so many people that I have been able to get so much enjoyment from the work I have put in as Chairman over the last two years. Individually I will only thank our sponsors, Continental Airlines, Atco, the Royal Bank of Scotland, Derwent Valley Foods, and the National Garden Festival, and above all the Sports Council, without whose support our financial situation would have looked completely different.

Finally, I must apologise to those associates who are at the A.G.M. for what is becoming a tradition of the Vice-Chairman presenting the Chairman's report. My excuse, that I am playing croquet in Florida, I feel is a valid one, for I hope the day never comes when administration becomes more important than what administration is intended to promote, the playing of the game we all love.

LONGMAN BOWL

The Ladies 'Second Six' will be held this year at Cheltenham from 10-14th September.

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Short Story

The Mystery of the Yellow Clip

By W.L. Simpson

It was a very warm day in early July and I had been invited to participate in the Secretary's Cup Tournament to be played on the new Croquet lawns laid down in Little Puddington, there in the depths of rural Dorset. I was very pleased to be invited to play in this tournament for I expected that my old friend Colonel Nigel Runahoop, from my former club, would be playing and I looked forward to coming up against him again at some point or other in the course of the competition. I was also very pleased to be able to take part as the club had, in the course of the last year or so, managed to raise sufficient money to acquire a wonderful site in Little Puddington and had laid down four absolutely superb lawns, flanked by a most attractive thatched roofed Clubhouse.

When I arrived at the Club and looked down the lists, there sure enough was the name of my old friend and I could see that, as there were only 16 competitors then, given a normal run of luck, we might easily meet in one of the quarter-finals. I played my first game shortly after arriving down at the grounds and, to my great satisfaction, I found myself in the last eight. As it happened, I was not drawn against my old friend in the next round, but found myself matched against Ian Peelalot who was regarded by the club as being

one of their best players.

I was, of course, a little disappointed to find myself up against such stiff opposition so early in the tournament and I think I was a little over-awed by the occasion and, at the third hoop, I muffed a really easy, straight 2 yard run at a hoop. So it was that I allowed my adversary to leap ahead of me and while I was still struggling with the 3 back hoop he was through rover and pegged out to destroy my chances of a game against my old friend Nigel. However, such is the game, and I retired to the Clubhouse to drown my sorrows in some of their excellent fare. The afternoon wore on and it was one of those July days that we rarely experience in Dorset - the sun shone and despite the shelter of the verandah it became very hot and oppressive. So, although my interest in the play continued unabated, I did find myself, after tea, feeling somewhat dreamy and detached from reality.

It was at this point that a very prepossessing youngish man came up to my chair and commented how unlucky I had been to be knocked out of the tournament so soon. We chatted for a while and he told me that he was not competing this year and wondered if I would like to come back to his place a mile or so down the road and have a little friendly match. As Nigel Runahoop was still

waiting for his next game, I thought it would do no harm to accept the stranger's invitation and, perhaps, have an enjoyable hour or so in his company. So we set off down the road in his Jaguar and shortly turned into the gates of a delightful small country estate with a couple of croquet lawns surrounded by trees and, at the far end, an attractive looking house which could easily have been mistaken for a croquet pavilion.

The hoops were already set up on the nearer court and we found ourselves to be fairly evenly matched and thoroughly enjoyed battling our way round the court. We were so engrossed in our game that we did not really realise how the time was passing until suddenly there was a peal of thunder and we looked up to the sky to find that the light was fast going and that a storm seemed to be brewing. We hurriedly collected up the mallets, balls, and clips, and retired to the shelter of the entrance hall of the house where there was a rack for the storage of croquet balls and mallets and a bar to which the clips could be attached, ready for the next players. Unfortunately, the yellow clip was missing and appeared to have been left out on the last hoop for we only had the red, blue, and black ones to put on the bar. By this time, however, the rain was falling really heavily and my new friend dashed out to the car, started it up and ran me swiftly back to Little Puddington. I suggested that he might like to join me for a nightcap in the bar but he excused himself and slipped quickly back to the car while I was still thanking him for the most delightful evening spent in his company. After all this, I did not feel like joining in the party with the other players, many of whom were unknown to me, so decided to go straight-away to my room at the local hotel.

Next morning, when I met Nigel who had been defeated in his semi-final, I told him about the evening I had spent with my new friend and his face took on a puzzled frown. When I described the appearance of my friend of the previous evening, I thought he looked at me a little strangely and he surprised me by asking me if I could remember the route to the little house in the country where I had played. I said that I thought I could and he asked me to come with him, in his car, to see if we could find it again. I was a bit surprised but agreed and led him without difficulty straight to the entrance drive to the house that I had visited on the previous evening.

At this point, I was completely taken aback for on turning into the drive, it seemed very overgrown and the croquet lawn no longer seemed to be as smooth and well kept as it had last night and, glancing up, I was astounded to see that the house was no more than a blackened ruin. See-

ing my astonishment, Nigel explained to me that the man I described sounded very like the former owner of the house who had kindly allowed the club to use its grounds as its H.Q. until a fearful storm had destroyed the house about a couple of years ago. The owner's body had never been found and it was generally believed that he had died in the ruins of the house.

Seeing my look of amazement, Nigel laughed and said that I must have been indulging myself rather too well of the previous evening and, during my sleep, had perhaps recalled from my subconscious, in a dream, the events as they had been recounted in the local newspaper. To me, it seemed incredible that I should remember everything so clearly, just as if it had happened, but Nigel was very convincing and I had to agree that he must be right.

Just a little disillusioned, I allowed Nigel to drive us off to the local inn where we promised ourselves to chat over old times with well-filled glasses in our hands! After dragging Nigel away from the tournament on such a wild goose chase I felt that I was honour bound to pay for the refreshment. As I took a handful of coins from my pocket and spread them on the bar, Nigel suddenly recoiled with a look of horror as he saw, there among the coins, a solitary yellow croquet clip....

1990 World Croquet Championship Qualifying Competitions

The Croquet Association will hold three Qualifying Competitions ("QCs") at which a total of five places in the 1990 World Croquet Championship will be at stake. The QCs will be held as follows:

QC1: Thursday & Friday, 12-13 July at Surbiton CC.

QC2: Friday to Sunday, 3-5 August at Surbiton CC.

QC3: Friday to Sunday, 10-12 August at Southport CC.

Entries for these Qualifying Competitions are subject to the following conditions:

QC1 - one WCC place available.

1. Entrants must be domiciled OUTSIDE the UK and Eire.

2. Although the format may be affected by the number of entries received, it is intended to play QC1 as an American block.

3. The entry fee is £15 and the successful qualifier will then be required to pay an additional £25 to take part in the World Championship. Entries should be sent to the Croquet Association to arrive not later than first post on Monday 23 July 1990.

QC2 and 3 - two WCC places available at each.

1. Entrants must be members of the Croquet Association, the Croquet Association of Ireland, the Scottish

Nottingham Croquet Club Diamond Jubilee

Report by Ian Vincent

The Nottingham Croquet Club celebrated its Diamond Jubilee last season, though Croquet has certainly been played in the city for longer than 60 years, as the record of its inaugural meeting shows:

'A General (Special) Meeting was held at the Windmill Cafe on Aug. 13th 1928, when Mrs Elliott reported that she had, after many enquiries, received an offer of land large enough for 4 full sized croquet lawns, from Sir Jesse Boot (now Lord Trent) at the University Park, Highfields, at an annual rental of £100. The following decisions were made:

1. To accept the offer.
2. To form a 'Croquet Club' with the Claremont Club.
3. To call the new club 'The Nottingham Croquet Club', University Park.
4. To transfer all the properties, monies etc. from the old club to the new.
5. To retain the old Committee with two extra members.
6. To authorise the Captain, Mrs Elliott, to make all necessary arrangements with the authorities to open the Club for the season 1929.

Sir Jesse Boot was, of course, the founder of what is now Boots Plc, but which originated as a single shop in the city where the company still has its headquarters. There is a bust of him in front of the park gates, looking

towards his manufacturing plant, with the inscription: 'Before him lies a monument to his industry. Behind, an everlasting monument to his benevolence'. He gave University Park to the city, as well as donating a larger area of adjoining land to what was then University College, which now forms the University campus.

Although we have no record of the Claremont Club, we do still have a link with Mrs Elliott, as her daughter, Miss K.M. Elliott, is still a Vice-President and Trustee of the Club.

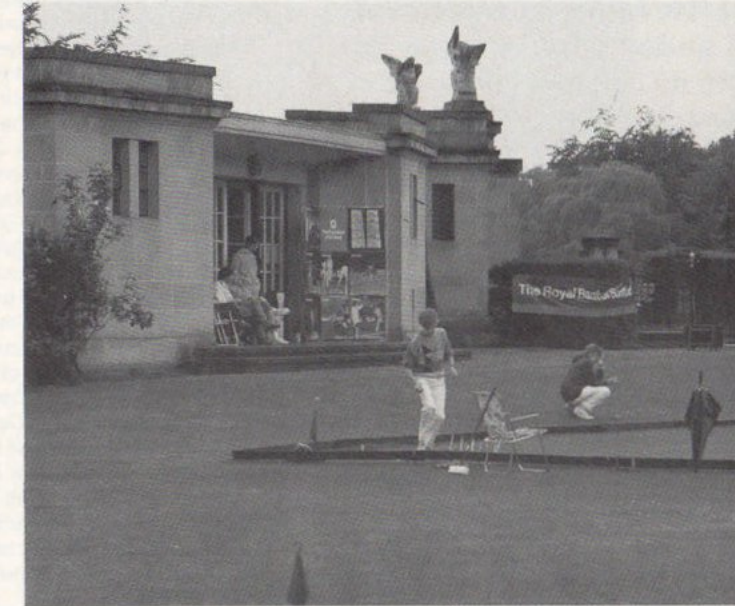
In 1930 the Club accepted an offer of 'the third bowling green and the West Pavilion' and decided to form a Bowling Section. This reached a peak with 41 members in 1939, but the number of bowls members fell off sharply after the war and, in 1950, after some years of debate, the City decided to open the bowling greens to the public. This left the club with the East Pavilion and four lawns, later increased to the present five. The concession that we can use two bowling greens during our annual tournament dates from this time.

The first tournament was also held in 1930 and appears to have continued annually since, though during the war it was 'unofficial' and the proceeds went to war charities. Many of our trophies were given in the early thirties, though the 'Robin Hood' handicap singles cup was presented by the Croquet Association in 1950.

The Club is fortunate still to have a complete set of minute books. Until the early 70s, the entries were all handwritten, which probably explains their succinctness when compared with those produced by current technology! A number of themes recur, many of them to the present day.

In 1931 it was agreed that 'a miniature lawn for beginners should be arranged'. Catering is certainly one of the hardy perennials: in 1936 it was reported that Mrs Wadsworth had written resigning her membership but that she was 'quite willing to continue providing chickens for the annual tournament'. The size of the membership has always been a matter for concern: as early as 1935 the Secretary was asking members 'to do their utmost to induce others to take up the game'. The C.A. were also appealing for more associates in 1939, though from the sound of it got a dusty response, as 'the Captain and members were disappointed that neither Manager nor Referees had been available at the tournament'.

Looking at the accounts each year, the financial position often looked precarious, with a balance of only £5-13-4 at the end of 1940. Indeed, it appears that the Committee may have put their hands into their wallets, or more probably handbags, to tide things over. There is a long



The Club House at Nottingham.

tradition of generosity by the President, with at one time wine being provided at lunch during the annual tournament, which has continued in various forms to the present day.

The number of full members fell from 70 initially to about 50 in 1950, but then plummeted to less than 20 in the mid-sixties. It then crept back to between 25 and 35 during the Seventies and early Eighties, increasing to 40 in the last few years. It is difficult to judge the playing strength of the Club in earlier years, though in the last decade we have always had members in the Invitation Eights and have three times been runners up in the Inter-Club competition.

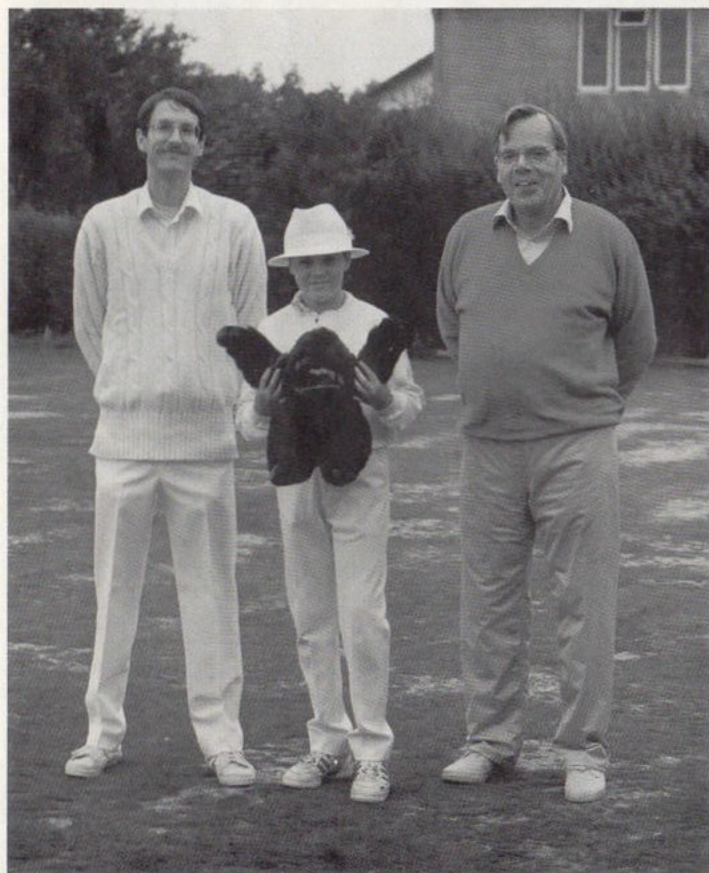
The revival may well have started with the recruitment of five boys from the Nottingham High School in 1966, three of whom, Gordon Hopewell, Geoffrey Taylor and Peter Elmes, are still members. Keith Ross did much to rejuvenate the club in the early seventies and the test match held in 1974 was instrumental in the recruitment of Roger and Dab Wheeler, Tim Smith and Peter Death. After several attempts, responsibility for running the club passed to a younger generation, with a revision of the rules to make the committee more accountable.

We celebrated the jubilee with a dinner at the University Club, at which we were entertained by David Appleton, who, in presenting us with a cartoon by Jack Shotton, depicting Croquet in the times of Robin Hood, suggested that the local outlaws may have intercepted equipment intended for the East Riding Club in an earlier C.A. Development Programme! The Mayor and (present day) Sheriff of Nottingham honoured us with a reception at the Council House during the annual tournament.

Our relationship with the City, our landlords, has not always been an easy one, and they decided to terminate our existing lease and negotiate a fresh one last year. One positive result of this, however, is that we can now use the premises after the park closes for the night. Tournament visitors will remember the manager's anxiety to get games finished before the Park Keeper's whistle went, and the frantic scramble to leave afterwards. Hopefully that will be a thing of the past, as we can now depart in more leisurely fashion by a new gate opening onto University Boulevard.

The Jubilee year was a sad one in that we lost by death three members of long standing, who had contributed greatly to the life of the club. All had also been Associates, and had played in tournaments both at this and other clubs in former years. Dr Mary Browning was an eminent physicist, formerly on the staff of the University. Buck, as Mr Bucknell was always known, held all three of the club offices at various times in the past, and both were Vice-Presidents of the club. George Henshaw, who had only recently retired, was renowned for his sympathetic coaching and care of newcomers, and had been helping to establish the South Derbyshire Club. We are greatly indebted to those and others who have served the club in the past.

We start our seventh decade with a new, alternate-stroke, 'individual' doubles tournament and hope to see friends old and new at that and our other events. If the mild weather continues, the rhododendrons that border the lawns could well be out by then: let us hope the Croquet continues to flourish as strongly at Nottingham as those bushes have done!



Bristol has a unique record in having amongst its members a regional winner in every Croquet Classic held so far. Here they are: Alan Evans (1988), Ben Green (1989), and Hamish Hall (1987). The photo was taken specially this year for the local paper as part of the club's publicity drive for new members.

Nottingham: 4-8 September
The 1989 Spencer-Ell Cup
Landor wins in close finish
Report by Andrew Gregory

Sunday afternoon, Nottingham bus station. Deserted, but for one croquet player. A solitary bus appears. The hopeful player approaches.

'Do you go to University Boulevard?'
 'No mate'
 'Which bus does?'
 'The 18'
 'When's that due?'
 'An hour.'
 'Oh! The player moves away. The bus driver takes pity.'
 'Hop in, mate. I'll take you.'

David Wiggins assures me this is a true story; though Andrew Gregory's method of travel was more pertinent to the outcome of the event. For the second consecutive year, the person who gave him a lift to this invitation event went on to win the tournament. Experienced watchers insisted that the result was inevitable from the moment von Schmieder withdrew, allowing in The Reserve Who Always Wins (nearly).

The first game of note provided Monday's tea-time entertainment. Francis Landor was for 4-back and peg with the innings against Jeff Dawson. Reluctance to finish from this position was endemic this week: Landor's failure was total as he missed the rush to 4-back entirely. This allowed Dawson to peg out Landor's forward ball with both backward clips on four-back. Dawson made one more hoop before retiring to a wide join on the West boundary. Landor hit the lift, took off from ten yards for a perfect rush on the other ball, and finished that turn.

This left Landor and Gregory as the only players with 2 out of 2, and they were told to play in the third round. This led to suspicions that our manager, Steve Thomas, was running the event as a Swiss. These were unfounded, as Steve discharged his principal duty excellently (i.e. supplying the beer).

After nine turns of Gregory v Landor, all the clips had reached at least 4-back, which left one last shot for Landor (hit), one last shot for Gregory (hit), and one 35 yard last shot for Landor (missed). So Gregory was left unbeaten, and only Alan Sutcliffe had yet to win. Only three games had been settled by more than nine points, so a closely fought week was in prospect.

That evening Ian Vincent escorted his guests to an Indian where, he assured us, the curries were not too potent. Their taste was mild enough, but not everyone got to sleep that night. This was more to do with the fact that the three players sharing a room all snored. One snorer is tolerable: but with two snoring asynchronously, the third has little chance of rest.

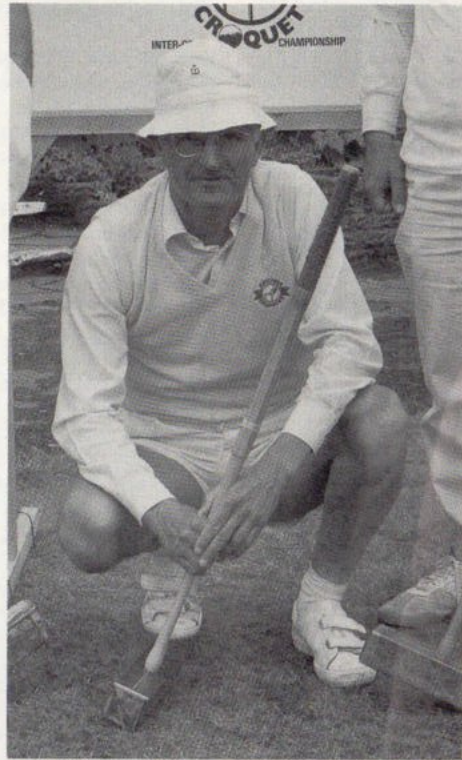
This affected the players differently. Gregory lost heavily to Vincent, while Landor compiled the week's first triple peel. David Goacher joined these two at the top by beating Dawson.

Keen historians of the game might like to confirm this as the first ever eight to include more than one fireman.

Tuesday afternoon saw the first, but sadly not the last, use of pegging-down discs. Indeed many games continued longer than might have been expected, given that the standard of play was reasonable, the well-watered lawns moderately paced. Maybe the players took more care in their

break-building, preferring a solid leave to the risk of conceding the innings. Maybe the out-player tactics were more defensive: Vincent once ran first hoop to find his opponent's balls in second and fourth corners. (Rising to the challenge, he rushed his partner ball into 4th corner, playing a thick wafer cannon to rush the corner ball off the North boundary behind hoop 2. A split shot approach from second corner gave Vincent a well-earned break.) Maybe the hitting-in was more accurate: though one reason for preferring a short lift shot from A-baulk to the long shot from B-baulk was the presence of an acorn-throwing squirrel in the Oaks overhanging the North boundaries. Or maybe we lingered too long over the excellent lunches and teas supplied by our fecund caterer.

The knock-on effect of the afternoon's late game meant that in the dusk Dawson and Bill Lamb were still battling on lawn 1. Dawson was for 4-back and peg; Lamb for 1-back and 4-back: the clips of death. Dawson had his balls in 1st and 3rd corners, and in the fading light Lamb was unable to place his 1-back ball in the jaws (which would have enabled him to rush-peel it next turn, avoiding concession of a lift). The pegging-down discs were brought out again.



Bill Lamb. Good tactics but inconsistent shooting.

Chez Vincent that evening the players had a chance to compare shooting styles. Not the respective merits of Irish and standard grips, but the ability to pan and zoom while keeping the object ball in focus. Yes, the Croquet Association has entered the video age and, as coaching supremo, Bill Lamb is curator of the C.A. Camcorder. Most of the players were eager to have a go behind the eyepiece, and the results were displayed on Ian's TV every evening in 'Match of the Day'. The actual footage was less than riveting - if there's one thing worse than watching your opponent go round, it's watching a recording of your opponent go round. However, the video did enable verification of the number of practice swings various players insist on taking: record 35 (with three refusals). It also revealed the surprising photogenic nature of one of our number. Many may associate David Goacher with his bearded grimace after an imperfect stroke. But point a camera at

him, and there steals across his face a broad, delightfully coy and slightly inane grin.

The players had a lot to thank Ian Vincent for. As Secretary of the Nottingham Club he carried out much of the administration. He generously gave his home for the accommodation of four players. And whenever someone looked to be breaking from the pack and running away with the tournament, Ian beat him. So when Landor beat Goacher to establish a clear lead after the first series, Vincent pulled him back in a close game. Nonetheless, Landor's lead seemed assured at the end of Wednesday.

Shot of the week. In a combination of carelessness and misfortune, Wiggins had left Landor in position to run first hoop. In his first stroke, Landor ran hoop 1 and hoop 2, so gaining the innings and the break.

At Wednesday teatime, Dawson had resumed his pegged-down game with Gregory by missing a short lift shot. It should have been straight forward for Gregory to finish from 4-back and peg, but his turn came to a pathetic end in the jaws of rover. Dawson took full advantage.

Later Dawson v Lamb was resumed on lawn 1, enabling the crowd to continue its debate on the best tactics in the clips of death situation. The opponent, it was argued, should keep one ball in 1st corner, while the other was best placed half-way along B-baulk. This gives a shorter shot should the other player attempt to set up a rush-peel at 1-back. Lamb abandoned such attempts, instead wresting control of 3rd corner from Dawson. This territorial approach did allow Dawson the odd pot shot into the corner, all missed. Just as the crowd was speculating on the game being re-adjourned without a hoop being scored, Lamb finally ran 1-back.

The clips of death occurred in other games. Wiggins (against Gregory) employed the rush-peel technique to such effect that he was nearly able to peel 2-back in the croquet shot. Gregory (against Vincent) decided to run 4-back instead, with the theory that after making penult it should be possible to extract the ball from 1st corner. Sadly, Monday apart, Gregory's theory and practice were failing to tally. And in the Lamb-Dawson rematch, Dawson ran hoop 6 without leaving any useful rush. His other clip was on 4-back, one of Lamb's balls was in 1st corner, and Lamb seemed already to be shaping to send the other into B-baulk with a triumphant cry of 'Revenge!'. Dawson threw aside his usual caution, rolled up to 1-back from nowhere, and had the cheek to run 2-back before making a safe leave. After that, Lamb was not to win another game.

Back to their first game, second session, Wednesday evening, and the only controversy of the week. Lamb went on after making 1-back to go round to the peg, but botched the leave. Dawson then had to finish from 4-back and peg, but faced with a longish approach to rover, retreated to a side boundary. It was now after 7.30, the agreed pegging-down time, and the red light on the video camera was flashing, indicating poor light. Lamb wanted to adjourn, but succumbed to the subtle crowd pressure. He missed his shot, and Dawson finished.

OK, that wasn't much controversy for a week's croquet, which just goes to show how nice we all were. There was no occasion to call on the ROT's adjudication, though Lamb discharged his hoop-setting duties with more enthusiasm than most can muster in the early morning. On Monday he discovered the hoops had been set too tightly, so thought he should widen them to President's Cup setting. Later in the week he revised this opinion, and re-set the hoops to sub-presidential width.

The leader-board had changed. For Dawson had notched up a surely unprecedented total of five wins in a day. At that rate he would finish with 17 wins (out of 14). The other players were relieved to learn that he had no more pegged-down games in reserve.

So after nine rounds Landor and Dawson led with 7 wins, Goacher had 6, Vincent 5, Lamb and Wiggins 4. Gregory had completed his 48 hour descent from 1st to 7th. Alan Sutcliffe had yet to win a game. That the other players did not dwell on this was not so much because of tact, more because they did not realise. After all, Alan was not outclassed: he was on the lawn as much as anyone, and was the only player in the eight to take (at least) one ball to 4-back in all 14 games. Perhaps his tactics in break-building were unnecessarily 'do-or-die', so that any error was costly; perhaps he too often took the aggressive shot when his shooting was off form. But the main reason he kept losing was that he kept losing. Confidence is the key in croquet: it is sustained by victory and sapped by defeat. Quite what Alan thought about, alone in his caravan each night, we shuddered to think. Yet each morning there he was with a cheerful smile and even more determination in his stride.

Spencer Ell Cup: 1989	FJRL	JPD	DJG	IGV	DCDW	WEL	AKG	AFS	Games Won		Final Total	Order
									1st Series	2nd Series		
F.I.R. Landor		+4 +17	+18 -19	+4 -4	+16 +15	+15TP +12	-3 +17	+15 +15	6	5	11	1
J.P. Dawson	-4 -17		-17 +4	+14 -26TP	+12 +15	+5 +25	+3 +24	+14 +7	5	5	10	2=
D.J. Goacher	-18 +19	+17 -4		+6 +16	+2 +20TP	-7 +17	+19 +16TP	+9 +7	5	5	10	2=
I.G. Vincent	-4 +4	-14 +26TP	-6 -16		-26 +20TP	+9 +17	+25 -3	+7 +4	3	5	8	4
D.C.D. Wiggins	-16 -4	-12 -15	-2 +16	+26 -20TP		-12 -11	+14 +16	+17 +7	3	3	6	5
W.E. Lamb	-15TP -12	-5 -25	+7 -26TP	-9 -17	+12 +11		-9 +18	+7 -14	3	2	5	6
A.K. Gregory	+3 -17	-3 -24	-19 -16TP	-25 +3	-14 -16	+9 -18		+4 -13	3	1	4	7
A.F. Sutcliffe	-15 -15	-14 -7	-9 -7	-7 -4	-17 -7	-7 +14	-4 +13		0	2	2	8

Heroic failures, TP section. Gregory once obtained the unusual leave of his balls in contact in the jaws of rover, with both clips on rover. Deserved to lose, but didn't.

On Thursday morning the three leaders each recovered from a break down to win. In the afternoon Goacher beat Landor to leave Dawson in the outright lead. In round 12 Dawson renewed his strategy of having a game or two in reserve. His game with Goacher was pegged down with both players for 4-back and peg. So the position over Thursday night was Dawson 9 wins from 11 games, Landor 9 from 12, Goacher 8 from 11.

As Goacher - Dawson was taking place on a far lawn, the cameraman

had taken to filming one of the numerous hot-air balloons which had been passing overhead that day. The crowd was concentrating on the distant shape, perhaps 500 feet up, 500 yards away, when someone noticed a rather closer balloon, perhaps 50 feet up, 50 yards away, and apparently about to splash down in the University Lake. Acting on some strange instinct, Vincent and Gregory chased after it, to see it land safely at the far end of the park. The balloonists said they had tried to land on a patch of grass just before the lawns, but it's an awful thought. It might give rise to the ultimate hampered shot (geddit?)

The tournament dinner was a sociable occasion, provided one remembered not to ask Alan how many wins he had. The players then returned to Ian's for another edition of 'Match of the Day'. Bill Lamb had recorded a number of players' shooting techniques, possibly for use in coaching. Many exemplary styles were displayed, especially Landor's flamboyant follow-through in which the mallet's head finished well above his own. However, there was one player whose style beginners would be ill-advised to mimic. Those who have observed Ian Vincent on the lawns may recall a slightly ungainly



David Goacher. A careful and patient temperament brought him joint second place.

on keeping the innings. He did this most effectively in the morning, with only the second triple peel of the week.

David Goacher also had ambitions for a TP, but was disconcerted to find his backward clip on second hoop rather than first. He was surprised to learn that not so long ago players deliberately peeled the backward ball through first hoop in order to make the triple easier. A delayed TP ensued, with a lengthy pause in lining up the straight rover peel. First David went to fetch a towel in order to lie full length on the grass, which was damp from the week's first drizzle. Then Lamb went to fetch a camera in order to photograph him doing this. Cue inane grin.

Landor v. Dawson was effectively settled when with one ball round each, Dawson, with uncharacteristic lack of care, left Landor a long-range

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double. Landor hit, and won.

The management now seized the opportunity for a tactical pegging-down. Gregory and Sutcliffe were evicted to allow Goacher and Dawson to finish their crucial game on the same lawn, while Gregory was able to resume a pegged-down game of his own.

Goacher missed the first shot, a 13 yard lift, and Dawson should have finished from 4-back and peg. Again he eschewed approaching a risky rover in favour of safety, and Goacher was able to miss another shot. Dawson then finished to leave himself and Landor level, with Goacher one game behind. The smart money was on a three-way tie.

Our first spectators arrived, one of them thoughtfully bringing the Spencer-Ell Cup.

The Ell was the eight with experience this year. The approximate average age of players in the President's was 29; in the Chairman's, 27; in the Spencer-Ell, 36.

The final round, all to play for. On lawn 1, Goacher took control of his game after a nippy ball round from Gregory; while Dawson was being completely shut out by Vincent. Only Landor seemed determined to avoid a play-off.

Vincent found himself having to do a straight rover peel. He knew the correct positioning, and had one ball just South of rover, the other near the boundary. Vincent does not like jump shots, and felt that his duty to the tournament required him to run the hoop safely. In doing so he roqueted his partner ball just to one side. The stop-shot peg-out was successful, to applause from the crowd. This was premature. Vincent had a three-yard

roquet to make. He negotiated that securely enough, and obtained a rush on the other ball to within eight feet of the peg. The crowd relaxed. This was premature. Vincent concentrated on pegging out on the take-off shot, missed, and finished about three yards past the peg. The crowd held its breath. A confident thwack on the peg did not follow - but a tentative deflection counts. Vincent had completed a well-executed seventh turn triple.

On lawn 4 Wiggins had staged a comeback against Landor, and had laid up for 4-back and peg. Landor wisely took a long lift shot, missing, into first corner. This distracted Wiggins, and he went to fetch it out before 4-back. This led to him scoring just one hoop before laying up again. Landor prepared to take the short lift shot. On lawn 1, Goacher again paused in lining up his rover peel, and watched the far lawn in awareness of the shot's significance. Landor hit. Goacher shrugged, and finished his second triple of the day before joining the crowd at lawn 4.

Landor, for 4-back and peg, had set up on the East boundary, with a possible rush to the hoop. Wiggins had one ball safe in 4th corner, and was preparing to play his other ball to safety. The crowd suggested that middle of the South boundary might be best, though revised its opinion after Wiggins actually played there.

Landor made 4-back, and rushed to three yards North of penult. Nerves showed as instead of his normal approach he played a clumsy half-roll. The one-yard hoop was run to the peg. The five-yard return roquet hit to the middle of the North boundary. A well played thick take-off sent his partner ball to within 3 yards of the West boundary, and left another 5-yard roquet on the ball in

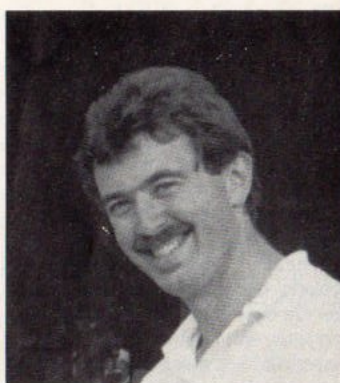
A-baulk. This hit, Landor played a roll shot toward the East boundary, and roqueted the ball in 4th corner. Then a remarkable shot which left the croqueted ball about 5 yards West of rover, his own ball one foot in front of rover. Landor finished from that to win the Spencer-Ell.

There remained one issue to be resolved. Just after 4pm, Sutcliffe's stubborn determination finally translated itself into his deserved first win. There was then no stopping him as he won his game resumed from the morning. He had at last found his form - or rather, his confidence.

Convivial company, excellent food, fine weather, level lawns. What more could one want? Well, a few more wins in the cases of Sutcliffe and Gregory. Apart from the latter's aberration on the first day, both struggled to break long losing sequences. Sutcliffe's was the greater frustration, losing many games narrowly; a disheartened Gregory rattled up a net score of -147.

Neither Lamb nor Vincent was sufficiently consistent ever to threaten the leader-board, their shooting often letting them down. Their sound tactics earned them respectable positions, Vincent showing class on the last day with two TP's.

Dawson and Goacher are both players ideally suited to the eight's format. They have a careful and patient temperament, and rarely concede an unforced error. This is not intended as a euphemism for slowness, and I must note that David Goacher's games were often earlier finishing. For when David has established a break, he clings onto it tenaciously: when the balls run adversely, sheer doggedness usually gets him through the next hoop. Whereas Jeff



David Wiggins. Cheerful throughout.

Dawson is the model of caution, always ready to lay up with an intelligent leave rather than attempt an uncertain hoop.

David Wiggins and Francis Landor share a straightforward attitude to the game. David, using a Jackson mallet for the first time, was happy to be selected and wore a cheerful demeanour throughout, win or lose. The difference was that Francis broke down less often and hit more accurately than David - than anyone else, in fact. Which is why he won. Simple game, croquet.

Congratulations to Francis, commiserations to the Selectors - it isn't their fault if the reserve wins.

Administration Secretary

It is taking longer than expected to fill the above position.

As a result, Associates will be delighted to know that the Council has asked Brian Macmillan to continue as our Administration Secretary until the end of December this year, and he is very happy to do so.

The Captain's Story

By David Openshaw

We set off from Gatwick on Dec. 27th determined to return a month later with the MacRobertson Shield. The journey went reasonably well apart from a 3 hour delay in Honolulu waiting for our connecting flight and the mystery of the disappearing mallets.

At Gatwick we learnt that under no circumstances could we take our mallets as hand luggage. They were regarded as offensive weapons! We were assured they would be looked after and put in a special container together with other peculiar items of luggage like skis and golf clubs. When we arrived at our first stop, Denver U.S.A., we had to collect all our luggage to clear U.S. customs. (Hopefully in the near future the U.S. will recognise there is no need to do this for transit passengers.) However 3 of the mallets were missing. Both at Denver and later at Honolulu we asked for the aircraft to be checked and tried to phone Gatwick but with no result. When we arrived in Auckland at 11am (34 hours after boarding at Gatwick) we collected our luggage and were just about to leave the Baggage Hall when in walked a baggage handler carrying our 3 mallets. We were all very relieved, particularly William and Mark Saurin, owners of the mallets. Members of the Auckland Association together with Bob Jackson and Joe Hogan met us at the airport and took us to our motel.

After 2 hours we were on our way to our first practice - this seemed the best way to acclimatise and fight the jet lag.

During the next 7 days we were hosted by six different clubs at Takapuna, Papatoetoe Orewa, Howick, Remuera and Manurewa. We made good use of this practice, usually playing from 10 to around 5.30. Our fitness was also helped by having a good mile of beach (ideal for an early morning run) right outside the motel. However only Mark Avery used this facility and then only for the first 3 days. The motel's trampoline was also used by all the team except David (his excuse was that he was too old for that sort of thing). After one of our visits to Manurewa we stopped off at a 10 pin Bowling Alley. Here William proved that you need more than brute force to knock down all ten pins and the winning honours were shared by Mark Saurin and David Openshaw.

A further vital part of our preparation for the Tests was our diet. Colin Irwin played a vital part in this. He cooked the most amazing breakfasts of bacon, egg, tomato and sausage every morning for all the team and really earned his 'Cookie' nickname.

All the clubs at which we played provided morning and afternoon teas and lunches. In the evenings we chose between MacDonalds, Pizza Hut, Kentucky Fried Chicken and the

Chinese Restaurant. We certainly didn't go hungry. During our preparation we particularly practised finishing from 'peg and 4 back' and 'peg and penult'. Success in this area can be vital and practice showed how difficult it can be.



The GB&I team that played against Australia. Back (L to R): Mark Avery, David Openshaw (Captain), William Prichard, and Keith Aiton (Coach). Front: Robert Fulford, Mark Saurin, and Colin Irwin.

These practice sessions were taken seriously and we were greatly helped in this by having Keith Aiton as coach. Keith has done a very good job coaching our Junior Squad over the last 2 years. His presence during the practising and during the matches certainly helped the team to maximise its chances of success. We were also helped by our supporters. It was certainly good to have some friendly faces around. Debbie Cornelius, Annabel McDiarmid, Bill Lamb, Chris Irwin, Richard Hilditch and Jerry Guest supported us throughout the whole tour and became very much part of the team.

We went into the match against Australia as favourites. However we were particularly determined to make sure they did not surprise us. After eight days of practice we were all ready for the real thing. The match took place at the Pakaranga Club, the Headquarters of the Auckland Croquet Association. This club were neighbours to the Bowling Club which was due to host the Commonwealth Games Bowling Tournament a week later.

The format of the MacRobertson Shield had been changed from the traditional 3 tests (of 9 matches each) against each of the other two teams to a single 21-match Test match against each of the other two teams. These 21 matches are made up of 9 doubles matches (each pair of one team plays the 3 different pairs from the opposing team) and 12 singles (1v1, 1v2, 2v1, 2v2, 3v3, 3v4,

etc). Doubles were played on days 1,3 and 5 and 4 singles on days 2,4 and 6.

Day 1. David Curtis the Manager of the Tournament opened the event and the Mayor of Pakaranga spoke ro-

bustly and welcomed the Great Britain and Australian teams. Eventually we were ready to start. The weather was not kind and as the club was in an exposed position the strong wind and rain made playing conditions difficult. We got the start we wanted, winning all three matches. Initial play was rather nervy as one would expect but Great Britain were ahead in all the games at lunch time. Australia's number one pair, the experienced Cleland and Latham, fought back after lunch to win the second +5 against Openshaw and Avery. But the third game went Britain's way with an Avery triple +17. Saurin and Irwin and Fulford and Prichard had convincing wins against Pickering and Ford and Herrington and Bury respectively. GB 3 Australia 0

Day 2. The day began with new boy 'Nipper' Mark Saurin marking his singles debut with a +26TP win against Leigh Herrington. This was closely followed by a Prichard triple against Bruce Ford. These two matches soon gave GB a 2-0 lead on the day.

The Greg Bury/Robert Fulford game was of high quality with 3 triples, with Robert's greater experience seeing him through. Full details of this game are described

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elsewhere.

David Openshaw had to play well to beat Colin Pickering, Australia's number one. Colin went to 4-back in the 5th turn but didn't take croquet again until David broke down on a triple in the 2nd game. Colin could not make the most of his chances and David won +17+14.

GB 7 Australia 0

Day 3.

Our confidence was now sky-high and we continued our winning ways determined to press home our advantage.

Avery and Openshaw won before lunch with 2 triples (one each) against Bury and an out of form Leigh Herrington.

The other two matches went to 3 games, Colin Irwin and Mark Saurin achieving an excellent win against the Australia top pair Cleland and Latham. They won the first game +26 although the Australians had the innings several times. In the second it was all Australia until Cleland missed a return roquet at penult. Britain reached peg and penult before Cleland hit in and soon Latham finished from 4 back +4 to Australia. The third game was in and out at the start but eventually Britain won well +21.

A missed Rover cost Pickering and Ford the first game. Prichard took the

opportunity and went to the peg with one peel and Fulford finished two turns later. The Australians played beautifully in the second to win +26 with a Pickering triple. He seemed likely to repeat the performance in the third game but he failed with a jump shot at 4-back, letting in Fulford who finished quickly with a triple. The Australians had started to show some form but things were still going our way.

GB 10 Australia 0

Day 4.

Mark Saurin won quickly against Leigh Herrington +20TP +11 to clinch the Test victory by lunch time, putting us eleven up with ten to play. Well played the 'Nipper'.

Number one Mark Avery had a good battle with Alan Cleland in a match characterised by good breaks and excellent shooting. Mark eventually won in the third.

Bruce Ford became the hero for Australia by winning their first match. He beat William Prichard. The first game saw mistakes on both sides but Ford caught up and finally won. In the second Prichard again had the early advantage until he stuck in 4 back with a triple underway. Ford immediately went to 4 back and two turns later made no mistake in completing an accurate triple peel.



The GB&I and Australian teams with officials after the first Test at Auckland.

Two tough fighters in George Latham and Colin Irwin faced each other. George won the first game +26 with a triple. Colin won the second and reached Rover and peg in the third before George recovered to take one of his balls to 4 back. On his lift shot Colin pegged out his own peg ball from 2yds. George crept around from the 3rd hoop to penult before Colin hit a shot to finish by running Rover and pegging out.

GB 13 Australia 1.

Day 5.

The highlight of the day was a wonderful turn by Colin Irwin in the second game of his doubles match. He and Mark Saurin had won the first +21. In the second Mark broke down at 1 back. Later Colin got in and attempted a sextuple peel. He played his break with great accuracy and looked to have a very good chance to complete it. However at Rover whilst his peelee went nicely through his own ball rolled on just a little too far for him to make a hoop. Hard luck Colin! He was soon back in to win the match.

Openshaw and Avery struggled in the first game against Pickering and Ford and lost by 16. However they took the next two games fairly comfortably +17 +16.

Australia won their second match of the Test when Cleland and Latham beat Prichard and Fulford. The first two games were drawn out and characterised by a number of break-downs on both sides but were shared 1-1, both +5. The third game went much more decisively and quickly to Australia +24.

GB 15 Australia 2.

Day 6.

All four singles matches went to three games as the Australians continued to show better form. However Great Britain's strength continued to show through as they took 3 of the four matches. Colin Pickering, the Australia number one, had run into fine form and he again played extremely well to register Australia's one win of the day. Mark Avery took the first game +19, but two fine triples by Pickering enabled him to win the match. In the third game he won +17TP on the seventh turn.

Openshaw and Cleland shared the

first two games and Cleland was well ahead in the third until a straight triple attempt went wrong and let Openshaw in. David scored the 26 points without allowing Alan back in.

Robert Fulford beat George Latham with a triple in the first game. Latham hit back in the second and completed three peels of a triple but missed the peg out. However he finished next turn. In the third Robert didn't have everything quite his own way but soon finished +24.

Colin Irwin found Greg Bury in excellent shooting form but too often Greg's tactical errors made things easy for Colin, who was in no mood to let his opponent escape. Colin won +17, -4, +18, to make the final score 18-3 to Great Britain.

An excellent result and certainly a well above par performance by Great Britain. The whole Great Britain team played consistently well over the six days and when they had the advantage really made the most of it. However we had seen enough of the Australians' potential and their fighting spirit to feel that they could perhaps make things difficult for New Zealand.

Great Britain 18 Australia 3.

Our new boys Fulford and Saurin acquitted themselves well in their first Test match. Mark won all his matches an excellent debut and Robert was showing a similar consistency to that which had won him the President's Cup in September. He demonstrated the ability to go into overdrive in the third game when it really mattered.

William Prichard playing in his fifth test series added his valuable experience to the side and contributed greatly to the team spirit. William flew back to Britain after this Test but kept in touch with us for the rest of the tour by fax. His further encouragement was to assist us greatly in the match against New Zealand. Steve Mulliner now joined us (he had been unavailable for the Australian match) and we set off for Hamilton and Napier where we were due to play against New Zealand Representative teams. Meanwhile Australia and New Zealand were playing their Test Match in Wellington.

GB v New Zealand Representative Team at Hamilton.

Playing against what was effectively the New Zealand 2nd team we were keen to continue our winning ways but perhaps in a rather more relaxed fashion than the tension of the Test matches.

The team practised at the Claudelands Club and the match itself was played over 2 days at the Hamilton East Club.

We took the opportunity to give Mark Saurin two tough matches. He beat Graham Roberts in 3 games but found Steve Jones in fine form and just lost -3TP, -4TP. On the second day Steve Jones completed a fine victory against an out of form Mark Avery +24, +25. The main feature of the match was the tale of two sextuples. Tony Stephens completed one in the first of his games against Steve Mulliner to win +26, but succumbed by 17 points in each of the next two games and Robert Fulford playing Madeline Hadwin seemed certain to complete another. However, having peeled and then run Rover himself, he contrived not to peg both balls out!

In the remaining matches Great Britain's strength dominated the games and we won the match 12-3. GB&I v NZ Rep. (At Hamilton)

Doubles (single games)

Avery & Openshaw bt Roberts & Harding +15.
Mulliner & Fulford bt Jones & Hadwin +24TP.
Irwin & Saurin lost to Stephen & Baker -5.

Singles

Avery beat Roberts +10 +24.
Saurin lost to Jones -3TP -4TP.
Fulford beat Stephens +26TP -17 +4TP.
Mulliner beat Hadwin +11 +26.
Openshaw beat Harding +2 +16.
Irwin beat Baker +26 +25TP.
Avery lost to Jones -24 -25.
Saurin beat Roberts -25 +16TP +5.
Mulliner beat Stephens -26SXT +17 +17TP.
Fulford beat Hadwin +19 +26.
Openshaw beat Baker +26 +9.
Irwin beat Harding +17 +15.

GB&I 12 NZ Representative team 3.

Meanwhile in Wellington the New Zealanders were not having things all their own way against Australia and were leading by just 4-3 after the first two days. However on the third day New Zealand's strength told and they won all three doubles to lead 7-3.

GB v New Zealand Representative Team at Napier.

We left Hamilton for the journey to Napier to play a somewhat different team containing 4 of their stronger but less experienced players, together with Steve Jones and Graham Roberts. We practised at the Hastings Club on the day before the match and were given a guided tour of the Hawkes Bay area together with members of the Hawkes Bay Croquet Association. Unfortunately on the tour Mark Avery turned badly on his

ankle and severely sprained it. He was definitely out of the representative match but after hospital treatment felt he would be alright for the Test match in four days time.

Our coach Keith Aiton came into the team and showed that he wasn't all talk by winning his match against Ian Dumergue +19TP +24TP. Steve Mulliner showed his form by completing three triples. Firstly in the doubles and then two more to beat Steve Jones comprehensively. We again out-played their team to win 8-1 but Greg Bryant caused an upset by beating Robert Fulford in three games.

GB&I v NZ Rep. (At Napier).

Doubles

Mulliner & Fulford bt Jones & Bryant +26STP.
Irwin & Saurin bt Roberts & Westerby +10.
Openshaw & Aiton bt Gleeson & Dumergue +24.

Singles

Mulliner bt Jones +17TP +26TP.
Irwin bt Roberts +14STP -4TP +19.
Fulford lost to Bryant -16 +26 +26TP.
Openshaw bt Gleeson +25 +20.
Saurin bt Westerby +8 +10.
Aiton bt Dumergue +19TP +24TP.
GB 8 NZ Representative team 1.

The next morning we flew to Christchurch for the 'big one!' New Zealand had gone further ahead of Australia on the fourth day to lead 10-4 but the fifth day was completely washed out by continuous driving rain. New Zealand clinched victory on day 6 by winning another 3 singles. But World Champion Joe Hogan lost -25 -17 to Colin Pickering who was continuing his excellent form. Final score was New Zealand 14 Australia 5.

The New Zealand versus Great Britain match was played at the United Club very pleasantly situated together with a Tennis club and a Bowls club in Hagley Park very close to the centre of Christchurch.

The lawns were in good condition on firm ground which became quite fast in sunny conditions. There were some rolls but we regarded them as good testing lawns, particularly because the President's Cup hoops, which were being used for the first time throughout this year's MacRobertson Shield, could be set very firmly in the ground. I remembered playing here in 1979 against Australia when all the players had had difficulty with the hoops. We had a morning practice session on the lawns two days before the Test was due to start. This enabled us to get some feel for the lawns but we knew that with hoops in new holes and the grass cut again, conditions would be more testing. On the day before the Test we practised at both the Elmwood and Fendleton Clubs, not particularly intensely - but it helped to pass the time until the big day arrived.

By coincidence both teams were staying in the same motel less than

10 minutes walk from the United Club lawns. Roger Murfitt had decided that the amount of work he needed to do as President of the New Zealand Croquet Council in the run-up to their A.G.M. to be held only 2 days after the Test finished would not allow him to concentrate fully on his croquet. Therefore he felt that he should give up his place to Steve Jones who had played so well against us the previous week. This also meant a further re-arrangement of the New Zealand doubles pairings. From our side we still had one problem: Avery's ankle had improved and he could play but it was clear he was not going to be 100% fit.

game was close and looked to be going New Zealand's way when Hogan pegged out both himself and Saurin leaving Jackson (for Rover) in front of Rover with Irwin for 4 back. But this was just the sort of position to test Colin's temperament. He took his lift from near corner one to get the best sight of Jackson's ball, hit it halfway towards 4 back, and went out on a 2 ball break to secure a magnificent first game for Great Britain. In the second game Great Britain's pair showed greater steadiness than Hogan and Jackson. This saw them through to a win +16 and put us 2-1 up on the day.

All in all, a good day for us.



New Zealand's reigning World Champion, Joe Hogan, at Christchurch.

Day 1.

A very hot sunny day greeted us with the temperature reaching 28 degrees C. Play quite naturally started very nervously but Mulliner and Fulford soon found their rhythm and looked well in control of their game against Beale and Skinley. The Great Britain pair went on to win +21 +17.

Steve Jones was finding life difficult in his first MacRobertson Shield match but Avery and Openshaw did not make the most of the chances he gave them. However the balance of the game changed dramatically. Jones didn't get position for one back in his croquet stroke, but he used his continuation stroke to put himself in position. Openshaw shot his ball near 1 back at the 2 back pioneer and missed into A baulk. Jones then ran 1 back hard and ended inside the yard line of the south boundary with a rush on Openshaw's ball. From there he went to the peg and Prince quickly finished to put them one up.

In the second game, Jones went quickly to 4 back on the fourth turn and with Openshaw out of form the New Zealand pair won comfortably in the end +11 +13.

In the third match the world champion pair of Hogan and Jackson were clearly not at their best, partly because of the pressure Irwin and Saurin kept them under. The first

GB 2 New Zealand 1

Day 2.

How the weather can change. It was cold with a temperature of 14 degrees C (only 3 degrees higher than London) and there was some drizzle about. We started very strongly and were 1 up in all four games at lunch-time.

Openshaw's form returned and he took the first game +26 from Skinley. Avery won a close first game against Jackson and Mark Saurin took the first against Beale. Steve Jones had reached penult and peg against Irwin before Colin made a hoop. But Colin got in and pinched the game.

The afternoon didn't go quite as well.

Jackson was in good form and although Avery reached 4 back with his first ball in each game, Jackson won both with triples.

However Colin Irwin had continued to dominate his game against Steve Jones and won +26 in the second to take the match. Saurin looked likely to beat Beale in two when he was peg and penult in the 2nd game. However Beale's lift shot just clipped Saurin's ball and he was back with a chance, which he took, taking both balls round to win +4 and then went on to take the 3rd game +17.

In the Openshaw/Skinley game,

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Skinley fought back to take the 2nd +10 but Openshaw was shooting well and took the third +17.

So 2 all on the day; perhaps not as good as it could have been, but we were still one ahead.

GB 4 New Zealand 3.

Day 3.

Pleasant weather returned for the second round of doubles but we had an extremely bad day. Hogan and Jackson were in good form and beat Fulford and Mulliner +19 +15.

Avery and Openshaw scrambled the first game against Skinley and Beale but Avery was not in good form and his ankle was still causing him some problems. Although the British pair had some chances, the greater steadiness of Skinley and Beale prevailed.

Saurin and Irwin had lost the first but won the second against Prince and Jones. Irwin in particular was playing well. The third game reached an exciting climax. With Irwin (peg) and Saurin (4 back), and Prince on the peg, Jones got in and made a break from penult to the peg. However he missed a 4 yard peg out and pegged himself out. It was only when the British pair went on to play that we saw the full extent of the error.

Mark's ball was wired from the other two and he had a lift, with a ball 4 yards out of baulk and the other near his hoop. A very nervy situation. Mark made four back but could not rush his partner ball after making penult. He had to take off to Rover which he made but without a rush anywhere useful. He then split Prince's ball towards the side boundary whilst attempting to get behind his partner ball at penult. However he ended up short and left himself a 6½ yard peg out. After a lot of lining up by the British pair, Mark hit the shot but missed the peg and just stayed on the lawn. He then joined up, leaving a rush to the peg. Prince from 11 yards went gently at the peg and hit to give New Zealand victory. A bad day for us. We were all rather depressed, particularly as we felt we didn't deserve to be behind on the run of overall play.

GB 4 New Zealand 6.

Day 4.

We had a team talk in the morning and after a night's sleep I think we all felt a little better. We resolved that we didn't need any heroics; all we needed to do was to take our chances - the old adage 'hit in and don't break-down'.

Things didn't start well for us. Steve Mulliner found Joe Hogan in good form and was beaten quite quickly +21 +26 to make the score 7-4 to New Zealand.

Beale and Jones had both taken the first game against Irwin and Saurin. But Fulford had won narrowly +4 against Prince. Fulford went on to win the second game by an even narrower margin +1. Excellent play by both players and the full details of

the game are described at the end of the article.

Meanwhile things were getting brighter. Irwin was hitting well and had taken the second (+18) and went on to take the third (+15) and Saurin was punishing Jones' mistakes to take the second and third +20 and +25.

So we were back in the match at 7 all.



Steve Mulliner in play at Christchurch.

GB 7 New Zealand 7.

In the evening our supporters, who had been joined by Robert Prichard and Phil Cordingley, invited the Great Britain team and the hard working referees to a barbecue. We all had a very enjoyable evening. Steve who had hardly hit anything all day was successful in knocking over the whole barbecue and later on deposited a bottle of red wine on the white carpet. Tony Stephens was refereeing entertained us by walking all round the garden on his hands - not bad for an old man.

Day 5.

We knew this was going to be a critical day. The team going into the final day ahead would really have a great advantage.

It was another hot day and we got off to a good start. Colin and Mark were quickly ahead with a +24 win against Skinley and Beale. Openshaw and Avery were also both playing extremely well and beat Hogan and Jackson +17. The third match was very close but finally went New Zealand's way +2.

By afternoon the lawns were very testing. Openshaw and Avery were well ahead again but the other two matches were progressing slowly. Just as Openshaw and Avery looked certain to provide a morale boosting win, they started to falter. In the other matches, Skinley and Beale were ahead in the second and Prince and Jones were also ahead. Things were swinging New Zealand's way. Then as it seemed likely that Hogan and Jackson would take their match to a

third game Avery hit the peg from 14 yards to win the game for Great Britain. A great match for us to win. (A more detailed version of this game is described later).

The other two matches were still far from finished but New Zealand were leading in both.

Prince and Jones were peg and Rover when Steve got in to peg out Prince. Soon Fulford was in with a

Paul Skinley and the two captains were matched against each other. Four tight games in prospect.

We got off to a good start. Steve and Robert were ahead, David Openshaw and John Prince were fairly level, but Joe was ahead of Mark. Steve converted his advantage into a +26 win and Robert won his first game +17TP. The other two matches were still in their first game. Steve was continuing where he left off in the first and looked in one of his irrepressible moods. For once he didn't consider any triple possibilities and really made sure he didn't let Bob in.

From afar I had seen that Steve was having the majority of the play. I walked over to his lawn having just played a break and was waiting for John Prince to take this lift. I hadn't appreciated just how near Steve was to finishing. He was just running Rover with his other ball on the peg and made no mistake to take the second game also by +26. What a fantastic way to win the MacRobertson Shield. Steve had played probably his best game ever to put us in a winning position 11-7 up.

The first games of Hogan/Avery and Prince/Openshaw were still in progress when Steve completed his win. New Zealand came out on top in both these games, and Paul Skinley levelled his match with a triple. After lunch the three remaining games turned into exhibition stuff. Hogan won with a triple, Prince, Fulford and Skinley all unsuccessfully tried sextuples. Prince and Fulford came out winners to make the final score GB 12 NZ 9. Now it was time for some well earned champagne.

Detailed descriptions of three key matches are given below.

Robert Fulford v John Prince (4th day).

This was the closest and probably the most entertaining battle of the whole Test match. It was played on day 4, which GB started 6-4 down. After Hogan had beaten Mulliner in 2 games, the remaining British players really knew they had to win to keep us in the match. Both Robert and John played extremely exciting and aggressive croquet. Robert's shooting probably was the distinguishing factor.

Game 1.

Fulford started well, going to 4-back on the 6th turn. Prince missed a long lift shot and Fulford looked set to finish until he failed 4-back with the peelee smack in front of penult. Prince went to 4-back but after the lift was missed he failed to get a break, mis-approaching fourth hoop. Fulford hit and took the penult ball to peg with a good leave. Prince decided to corner, leaving Fulford to 2-ball out. Fulford failed at penult but Prince missed his 4 yard lift shot. Fulford got to peg, running Rover hard. But with partner near peg he missed a 6 yarder at one of Prince's balls. Prince reached the peg with his

balls in 4th corner and one of Fulford's balls in corner 1. Fulford cornered his other ball in corner 3.

What followed was an amazing turn with Prince playing a 2-ball break round despite having rushes to both the cornered balls at times. Playing with fantastic control he eventually failed his first difficult hoop of the turn at 4-back. Fulford croqueted partner near to the peg and pegged out Prince's peg ball and his own leaving just 2 balls on the lawn. Prince shot at the peg ball and missed. Fulford won +4.

Game 2.

Fulford went to 4-back and Prince hit the lift. Prince laid for a delayed sextuple/TPO and after Fulford missed he surprised the more knowledgeable spectators by peeling partner. The sextuple never got going and he only reached peg and 2-back.

Fulford made a leave from the contact and Prince took a very aggressive 25 yard shot with Fulford joined up at 1st, but missed. Fulford still gave him another lift length shot to get a break, but this again was missed. Fulford got to penult and peg and pegged out Prince.

Prince hit the short lift at Fulford's peg ball near 2nd corner and did a fantastic roll up to 2-back, giving himself a yard long angled hoop with Fulford's remaining ball near 4th corner. He failed the hoop. He was then only allowed long shots and Fulford reached peg and peg, and pegged one out, leaving Prince near 2nd corner.

Many spectators thought the match was over at this point, but they didn't allow for Prince's determination and years of experience. He hit in and approached 2-back, splitting Fulford's ball towards the east boundary. He ran 2-back and guarded Fulford's shot at the peg. Fulford shot anyway and Prince decided not to take the nervy 4 yard pick up but instead played a fantastic shot, getting a foot in front of 3-back. Fulford trickled 3 yards short of peg. Prince ran 3-back, hit Fulford, approached and ran 4-back, rushed to a few yards from penult, approached and ran the hoop, getting a rush to the north boundary which he took and took off back to Rover and left his ball in position.

Fulford went to the middle of the east boundary. Prince ran Rover and jumped back over the hoop but missed the peg. Fulford shot hard at the peg missing by a whisker. Prince trickled at the peg. Fulford then hit the 15 yard shot centre ball to win +1. One of the spectators summed the game up afterwards: 'its a shame there has to be only one winner!'

Openshaw & Avery v Hogan & Jackson (5th day).

On this tense day of the deciding Test the two teams were locked together at 7 matches all. Great Britain having fought back the previous day from a position of 7-4 down.

Openshaw and Avery won the first high quality game +17 and by mid afternoon looked likely to finish the second in similar style. However the tenseness of this game and the other two doubles, and the increasingly fast lawn conditions, caused a very tense finish with a number of mistakes on both sides. Eventually GB won and this victory against the top NZ pair was a great psychological boost for Great Britain, laying the foundations for a 3-0 doubles victory on the day.

rush back to the peg. He decided to roll to the peg and pegged his own ball leaving Avery by peg.

Jackson hit Avery's ball from 13 yards and made a leave for Hogan. Avery narrowly missed peg from near corner 1. Hogan went to peg, and left Avery's ball near corner 2, wired from peg, and Jackson a 2-3 yard rush out of corner 4 to penult. Avery shot at the opponents and missed narrowly. Then Jackson does not commit Avery's ball to Rover but



The GB&I team that played against a representative NZ side at Hamilton. Mulliner, front right, has replaced Prichard.

Game 1.

Hogan missed on the 4th turn after Avery had hit the tice on the 3rd. Avery went immediately to 4-back. Jackson hit the lift and went to 4-back. Avery hit back and made a leave for Openshaw. Hogan missed and Openshaw went to the peg. Jackson missed the lift and Avery finished from 4-back to win the game for GB +17.

Game 2.

Jackson stuck in 2 early on and Avery hit in but a mis-approach at 6 enabled Jackson to go to 4-back, with the new New Zealand 1990 leave! Opponents' balls in corner 2 and in tice position level with peg, their own balls on the east boundary 8 yards apart.

Openshaw just missed the lift at tice ball, but Hogan missed an 8 yarder after hoop 3. Openshaw hit a 10 yarder and went to 4-back. Avery got going after the lift was missed but stuck in Rover. However he was not punished as Hogan rebounded off hoop 2. Avery made Rover and left Openshaw a rush to 4-back near corner 3. The opponents decided not to shoot. Openshaw made 4-back but a bad approach to penult resulted in failure.

Hogan got going and achieved a straight triple position but after doing one peel, he stuck in penult. Avery made a good leave, with an opponent ball at penult wired from the other three balls. The opponents again decided not to shoot. Openshaw made penult and scrambled through Rover off partner ball, but without a

MacRobertson Shield

puts it about 4 yards off south boundary behind Rover but just open to peg.

After a nervous approach to penult he blobs. After a tight refereeing decision Avery is just open on Jackson's ball in front of penult. After quite a bit of thought, Avery hit the peg smack in the middle from 14 yards to the delight of the British supporters and players.

Openshaw & Avery beat Hogan & Jackson +17 +4.

Mulliner v Jackson (6th Day).

Great Britain started the day 10-7 in the lead, needing one more win from the four matches being played. We could have been in for a very tense day. However Stephen played exceptionally well and won in just over 2 hours to clinch the MacRobertson Shield. Before play started our coach Keith Aiton had told Steve to win in 2 hours. We were all very glad that Steve did as he was told! He describes his match below.

Waking up with a 10-7 lead and only one win needed for ultimate victory does not actually inspire euphoria. The utter awfulness of possibly dropping all four singles to give the holders an unexpected win ensures that breakfast is a sober meal. The captain and the coach remind us to concentrate on our own

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games and on taking 4-ball breaks all the way but speculation is unavoidable.

Robert seems to be the banker - he should be too strong for Skinley, David and Prince will have a dour captains' battle. Mark and I have our hands full with Hogan and Jackson. Two days out of the previous five have seen whitewashes. The tension has been building all week and Colin and Mark 2 complain about having to suffer on the sidelines. Only Chris Irwin seems really phlegmatic but the cigarettes are doing well, so perhaps she isn't.

Today will be hot and the courts should quicken up towards midday. Errors can be expected and the battle will be principally one of minds. This also means that it starts at least 30 minutes before the coin is tossed. We reach the United Club in plenty of time and go our separate ways to prepare. A brisk and outwardly confident greeting to the Kiwis and a quick tour of the court. The coach comes over to opine that I can beat Jackson in two hours (qualified to two-and-a-half if he hits something). I think he's off his head. Suddenly, its time to go. I win the toss and elect to play first. Jackson claims not to believe in luck so I wish him it on the Potter principle.

We play a standard opening and I take the long shot down the east

boundary. Jackson hits a 15 yard tice. Blast him! Luckily, he can't make immediate progress and leaves Blue near corner 4 and Black near hoop 3 before laying up on the west boundary with an approximate rush to hoop 1. This is not time for heroics so I send Black firmly into Corner 3. Jacko springs a mild surprise by choosing to rush Yellow north of hoop 2. He takes off to Black and then Blue and approaches hoop 1 from corner 4 with a big roll. Two yards and almost straight is not bad from 20 yards but he bangs at the hoop and Red rebounds almost to the middle of the south boundary.

The 6-yarder he leaves me is a serious temptation but there is no graver mistake than to hand the innings back at once. Punish the opposition for his error, make him suffer, make him wait. So I join partner, going a yard east of Black to avoid a double for Yellow. Jackson sends Red to corner 4 without a second thought and I have the innings at last. A savage cut sends Blue nicely to Yellow, Blue is stopped to hoop 2 and Yellow is rushed 2 yards south of hoop 1. A firm stop-shot approach, a straight 2 foot hoop and we're away.

The 3-ball break is already there but Red needs to be dug out of corner 4 before hoop 4. That goes alright and I run hoop 4 safely but disaster



Steve Jones making his Test debut for New Zealand at Christchurch.

does its best to strike when I manage to rush Yellow, the pivot, into the back of hoop 5. Brilliant. I play a thick take-off to nudge it through rover, get a rush on the pilot with the intention of bombarding Yellow away in the hoop approach. Predictably, the clearance is only partially successful and I am left with an angled jump through hoop 5. Immense relief as it spins through but then I find that there is still a 5-yarder to hit. Great. I hit, give some fist to show who's in charge and realise with relief that the break is now laid. 4-back is reached without further ado and the leave gets 7 out of 10, being a diagonal spread with both my balls on the east boundary.

Jackson ponders briefly and then surprises me again by electing to take the long double from corner 3 at the balls near corner 4. He hits to wild applause and looks grimly satisfied. In fact, he has hit too well and cannot get a rush anywhere useful. Black is left slightly west of hoop 4, Blue near corner 3 and Jackson leaves another lengthy rush into court from the middle of the west boundary. What now? I feel aggressive and decide to cash in on having the first ball round by taking the big shot with Blue at Black. It hits, centre ball almost all the way, and I can't restrain a big fist as Black crashes off the south boundary. A big roll sends Black all the way to 4-back to prepare for the peel and Blue gets a rather gratuitous 1 foot position on Red. Rush Red behind Yellow, put Red to hoop 2 and rush Yellow to hoop 1. It all goes rather well, with the first two peels going through on schedule. However, the third peel survives three attempts and I am forced to end on peg and rover, with much the same leave as before. Jacko duly repeats his lift shot but this time he shaves past into corner 4. I turn round and hit him, take off to partner, rush to Yellow up near hoop 2 and finish in reasonable order. One-nil.

Jackson goes first this time and I switch the colours on principle. He shows he means business by hitting

down the length of the east boundary for the second time in three attempts. He lays up on the east boundary with the usual rush towards the ball on the west and I have the choice of the dangerous 14 yarder or the safer 23 yarder. He hasn't made a hoop yet so it seems sensible to hand him nothing on a plate. Besides, that east boundary is a little odd. It swings in by a fraction so the aiming point is a ball's width left of the target and this gives you a comfortable feeling akin to facing a double.

I go for the longer shot from corner 3 and immediately get that 'on the beam' feeling. I look up and see Yellow four yards short of impact, just on the left-hand edge of Black and beginning to take the swing. Well worth a fist, but any incipient overconfidence is rudely shattered by an awful rush towards hoop 1 that finishes nearer hoop 5 than anything else. Fortunately a good roll puts Blue up to hoop 2 and gives me a straight if lengthy rush on partner to hoop 1. It goes remarkably well, just three feet past, and there are no problems on the road to 4-back and a really good diagonal spread. Jackson again takes the shot from corner 3, this time at a single ball, and again misses into corner 4.

Game and break up. The situation and the rapidly-quickening court conditions rule out a delayed triple as a match and Shield-winning manoeuvre. Given that self-denying ordinance, the break for Blue to the peg presents no problems and I manage to leave another good diagonal spread. Jackson now changes tack and lifts Black, the ball nearer the peg, to A-baulk and fires at Blue south-west of hoop 2. He misses into corner 3 and then plays his stopping bisque by returning his mallet to its cover. However, it is wasted on me as I never notice anything outside the court.

Peg and 4-back and the match and Shield to win. The blood pounds and I try and persuade myself that it is just another finish, just another kill. The first shot is no problem and I work off

MacRobertson Shield

a little nervous energy by smashing the rush on Red across to the west boundary as hard as I can. Jacko's miss has forced the issue by giving me the extra ball. I can stop-shot Red to penult and hold the rush on Blue to Black in corner 2. I get that and give myself a dolly rush to 4-back. Don't be short - don't under any circumstances be short in this situation. I leave it 4 yards short, 4 yards due west of the glassiest approach on the court. Taking everything into account, a take-off to 18 inch position seems best for me and it seems to be gliding into ideal position. Then it finds a hint of extra slope and idles on to end up 4 feet away but more or less straight. To smash or to stroke? Violence is basically vulgar and, with the chips well and truly down, I prefer to trust my hoop stroke.

At times like these, prostrating oneself in front of a hoop seems a particularly good idea and I take my time to calm down and get the line fixed in my mind. Off we go, slow back and ... thank heavens, Yellow enters the hoop, checks momentarily and spills through by a foot. The roquet on Black is made and the tension dissolves. Concentrate, you fool. Penult and rover present no problems and, with partner already parked near the peg, I have the easiest of finishes. However, NZ custom demands that a referee is called to check that you don't rush onto the peg. So I wait for Jock Campbell to make his way out from the hut and I don't mind a bit. Yellow hits the peg from 6 inches. The Shield is ours. It's a lovely moment.

TECHNICAL AUTHORS

The CA is to produce a number of technical pamphlets. Some material is already available for the first two on 'How to Set Up a Croquet Club' and 'How to Lay a Croquet Lawn', but we need someone with the time to put it together. A flat fee of £100 is offered per pamphlet.



Sally Watson 'directs' a take-off.

Croquet Mallets

Dear Sir,

Having been dissatisfied with a purchased mallet of which the head was of laminated plastic material, I decided to make an ideal mallet. This proved more difficult than expected. However, my initial conclusion is that ability to play successfully depends more on the quality of the player, than on the characteristics of the mallet. Perhaps other readers would like to comment on this.

It would seem that in earlier days mallet heads were of lignum vitae or box wood, probably on the basis of durability. Even these heads were subject to splitting at the zone of impact with the ball, and as a result it became common to reinforce with a brass band. More recently the playing face tended to be provided with a plastic finish, by, for example, an adherent slice of plastic laminate. Heads wholly of plastic or of laminated plastic have also been used.

Law 2(e) makes it clear that the end faces of the head may be of material other than wood, but having no advantage over wood. It is also made clear that the end faces must be identical in every respect. It is therefore not possible to have differing woods at either end, nor to have one end wood and the other end plastic. Thus, incidentally, if the commonly used plastic laminate comes off one end, as is prone to happen, the mallet is thereafter illegal.

As regards the shape of the mallet head, anyone who has tried to knock a nail into wood using the side of the hammer will appreciate that the shape of the mallet will have to be

broadly what it commonly is (Law 32 (a)(v) must also be taken into account here). Nevertheless, considerable variation is still possible within the terms of reference e.g.:

1. length of head.
2. cross section of playing face of head
3. weight of head.
4. elasticity (coefficient of restitution) of material of head.
5. flexibility of shaft.

As regards (1) it seems to me that manipulation close to the hoop is most important, however, that aspect seems to be covered by 'Croquet', November 1989 p.18.

As regards (2), I have used mallets with playing face area from 31 to 40 sq cm and with width of face from 5.5 to 6.5 cm without noticeable variation in play.

Since a good player will normally contact the ball on each occasion over a very small area of the playing face, it would seem that a mallet head could be of much smaller cross section than is common. This would, in fact, seem to have advantage in the use of the mallet close to a hoop, or through the hoop. It would seem possible that the more usual cross section (2.25 x 2.25 inches, i.e. about 5.7 x 5.7 cm) might have arisen from the specific gravity of the wood used, taken with the 9 inch (about 23cm.) length desired.

As regards (3), I have used mallets of weight 2lb 4oz to 2lb 13oz with little difference in overall performance. Perhaps the relevance of weight becomes more important as basic ability improves. Possibly distribution of weight is more relevant, or perhaps it is important only to have a long experience of the use of a particular weight and weight distribution.

On the other hand, since the momentum of the head of the mallet is the product of its mass and its velocity, a particular momentum is achievable with a lower velocity if the mass of the head is relatively large, and presumably a better control of the strike is possible with a relatively lower velocity of the head.

As regards (4), if u_1 and u_2 are the velocities of two bodies before impact and v_1 and v_2 the velocities after impact, all measured in the same direction, then

$$\frac{v_1 - v_2}{u_1 - u_2} = -e$$

where e is the coefficient of restitution (elasticity). It can be seen, therefore, that

$$v_1 - v_2 = -e(u_1 - u_2)$$

That is, for a high coefficient of restitution of the material of the mallet head, the difference in velocity between the head and the ball after

Your Letters

the strike will be maximized. Therefore, presumably, sending the ball a given distance will require relatively less effort, with corresponding accuracy.

As regards (5), the mechanism of transfer of momentum from the mallet to the ball may be assumed to be as follows. At the instant of contact the mallet head will start to contract longitudinally and the ball will start to deform. During the following period after contraction is completed and restitution takes place, the ball will steadily acquire an increasing velocity until contact is lost. With a flexible shaft, during the stroke before contact the flexure of the shaft will enable storage of potential energy, and the recovery from the flexure will extend the time of contact during which the velocity of the ball is increasing, with consequent greater final velocity. It must be understood, of course, that there are many types of stroke required, which makes the choice of characteristics of the mallet something of a compromise.

I should be grateful for any references concerning the design of mallets, or the characteristics of the various woods.

E.C. Owen,
Sidmouth.

Full Bisque Games

Dear Sir,

The first paragraph of Simon Tuke's letter (Issue no. 207) reveals a misunderstanding of full bisque games which I have noticed among other players and even some very experienced managers with whom I have discussed the full bisque game.

The full bisque game does not mean that everyone who plays necessarily gets his/her full bisques. The Laws (Appendix 3. Page 36) allow for a base handicap to be determined for any event. For example in this year's All England Handicap a base of 6 is being used.

This means that those games where either competitor has a handicap of 6 or less will be played as ordinary handicap games.

In all other games i.e. where both competitors have a handicap of 6 or more - each player will have his full bisques minus 6.

This law was intended to guard against the giving of bisques to players in low handicap games. I would have preferred that the Law makers had been more definite and established a fixed *minimum* base handicap of 4.

However, having tried over a very long time to interest the Council in full bisque play, I was at the time contented to see Appendix 3 in the Law book at last. I look forward to the time when this ceases to be an Appendix and becomes incorporated in the Laws as the standard method of playing handicap croquet. Lionel Warrad,
East Clanton.

Your Letters

Computation of Theoretical Handicaps

Dear Sir,
I would like to add to the articles on handicaps by Chris Hudson and Donald Cornelius that appeared in the March issue of the Gazette by describing a system we have tried at Bretby for the last two seasons. The calculations were carried out at the end of each season to give an assessment of each player's average performance during the year.

To apply the system, it is necessary to record the points scored by each player rather than just whether a result was a win or a loss. However, this was already the current practice for the club competitions at Bretby. This information is potentially quite useful, as a 26-25 win provides rather different information about the players' relative abilities than does a 26-0 win.

The basis of the system is that a player's handicap should be equal to the number of bisques the player needs to play on equal terms with a scratch player. If we assume that the scratch player will make two all-round breaks given the chance, his opponent with a handicap of H must use his H bisques to make two all-round breaks at the earliest opportunity. Thus, on average, the value of a bisque to a player of handicap H is 26/H points. Conversely, if a player scores on average P points with a bisque, his handicap should be 26/P. Note that this formula is not intended to apply to minus and very low handicaps. It should also be corrected for play on small lawns. Our main lawn is 5/7ths (linear) full size, so the value of a bisque is assumed to be 7/5ths the value of a bisque on a full-size lawn. However, in the following discussion, the size of the lawn will be taken as full.

It follows from the formula that in level play players should score points in inverse proportion to their handicap. For example, a handicap 9 should score twice as many points as a handicap 18 and win by 26-13 in a full game. The value of a bisque to the handicap 18 is 26/18 (about 1.4) points, so in a handicap game his 9 bisques should enable him to score a further 13 points and have an equal chance of winning.

In practice, of course, games rarely go exactly according to form and a single result is of limited value in assessing handicaps. Given enough games, though, it should be possible to estimate handicaps with a reasonable degree of confidence. Unfortunately, it is necessary to use a fair amount of time on a computer to solve the problem.

The method used is a trial-and-error approach. A rough handicap is first guessed for every player and a measure of how well this set of handicaps agrees with the actual results is calculated. A new set of handicaps is then derived from the former by making a random change (within limits) to each handicap. If the new

set of handicaps gives a better measure of fit than the first set, the first set is rejected and replaced by the new set. If not, the new set is rejected. The process is then repeated. By making enough iterations and controlling the limits of the random changes, we can gradually home in on a set of handicaps which gives a best fit to the actual results.

The measure of how well a given set of handicaps agrees with the actual results is obtained as follows. Consider one result where A gave B 6 bisques and was beaten 20-26. For handicap games, it is first necessary to 'correct' the score to the equivalent level game. Suppose the handicaps of A and B within the given set are 10 and 13 respectively. Then B should score 26/13, i.e. 2 points per bisque and therefore 12 of his points are assumed to be due to his 6 bisques. It follows that the score corrected for a level game is 20-14, i.e. that A scores 20/34ths (0.588) of the total points.



The Budleigh Salterton Week - August 1989.

However, it was shown before that for a handicap 10 playing a handicap 13, the points scored in a level game should be in the ratio 13:10, i.e. that A should score 13/23rds (0.565) of the total points. This game therefore contributes an error of 0.023 (the difference between 0.588 and 0.565) to the valuing of the set of handicaps in question. The required solution is the set of handicaps which minimises the sum of the squares of the errors for all the results.

We have found this method to give reasonable solutions that are independent of the initial rough guess at handicaps. As an option, one or more players' handicaps can be held constant (e.g. those who play regularly in tournaments) and the other players will then have handicaps set relative to the fixed ones.

R. Davis
Retford.

Tournament Fees

Dear Sir,
I write to appeal to all croquet clubs to follow the example of Nottingham Croquet Club and Oxford University Croquet Club who have special tour-

namment rates for students and juniors. What is apparent is that for croquet to thrive young people have to be attracted to it. That is young people of all classes and wealth. For unless our young aspiring test stars of the future have wealth from parents then they are in trouble, as they are in a no win situation.

Up to the age of sixteen their only source of income is from a newspaper round. Beyond the age of sixteen there is more room or more options to take in order to raise money for tournaments. The main one is a weekend job but this then means availability to play in weekend tournaments is extremely limited - a no win situation. The same problem accompanies students who scrape to live on their grants as it is. Even working during the summer means most of the season is missed. Not only do tournaments have entry fees but also accommodation costs, transport costs and money to spend

- a large financial burden for the young.

I feel I speak for many students and juniors when I say this and I urge clubs to try and promote croquet in the youth by reviewing its tournament rates. The future of our game is at risk.

Mark Saurin,
Darwen.

The Chairman's Salver

Dear Sir,
I have been surprised by the continuing correspondence over the incident at the Chairman's involving David Maugham and myself. Some of the writers have taken a rather extreme or severe view - it is important to maintain a sense of proportion.

Consider what happened: the two players' opinions differed as to whether a ball had been hit or not. Law 45(f) covers this eventuality. Unfortunately, no-one was particularly well-placed to be certain of what had happened. Both players being referees and aware of the Law 45(f) it was immediately agreed that witnesses should be consulted.

This gave a resolution of the incident, and play continued. David won the game, and as a result, the Chairman's Salver. He deserved to win, having generally played the best croquet of the week, on some very difficult lawns.

Enough said.
Martin French,
Ipswich.

Dear Sir,

In view of the volume of correspondence on the Chairman's Salver incident, I would be grateful if you will publish the following as a statement by the Chairman of the Laws Committee on the letters page of the May issue.

The Chairman's Salver incident. A disputed roquet in a critical game in the 1989 Chairman's Salver has given rise to several letters in recent issues of Croquet. The following points are intended as general guidance for this subject.

1. Disagreements about whether roquets have been made are happily rare, especially at the highest levels of the game. The Striker is almost always in the best position to judge because he is the person standing on the line of the shot and closest to the target. It is right that his decision should be trusted as trust in an opponent's sense of fair play is fundamental to croquet.

2. Law 45(f) deals with those less common occasions when the striker may not be in the best position to judge and is doubtful about the outcome of the stroke. Examples include a possible roquet at very long range where the target ball is much closer to the opponent or spectators, and cases where the striker's ball hits a hoop, the peg or a previously roqueted ball before possibly hitting a valid target ball.

The Law deliberately states that the players should consult reliable witnesses and not that they must because spectators' views are only relevant if there is doubt. If the striker is sure that he hit, no matter by how little, there is no doubt and no reason to consult third parties. Equally, if there is doubt and after consultation with third parties there remains doubt, the striker should not claim the roquet.

3. It follows that the correct practice is for the opponent to accept the striker's definite word unhesitatingly at all times. One query may be permissible, a prolonged dispute or pressure to consult third parties is not. If an opponent is convinced that the striker has cheated, he should make a formal complaint to the Laws Committee. The incident will be investigated and, if appropriate, a formal warning as to future conduct will be given. If a body of evidence accumulates that X regularly claims roquets that he should not, appropriate and severe action will be taken. X will not be selected for

invitation events and teams and may have his entry refused for other tournaments.

4. It is very doubtful if tournament reports should detail disagreements of this sort. No matter how certain the writer is of his ground, the correct remedy is as described above and an injustice is preserved like a fly in amber for as long as copies of the magazine are collected.

Stephen Mulliner,
Chairman, Laws Committee.

Death of TP greatly exaggerated

Dear Sir,

In Croquet edition 208, John Portwood suggests that A Class players should reject the triple peel, and offers an alternative tactic. I do not think he will convince many!

I observe that the real difficulty is not in taking a break round (even a peeling break), but in picking up the break and in making a good leave. A TP win requires just two breaks and one leave. John Portwood's alternative requires four breaks and three leaves. I think the likelihood of making a significant error in these four breaks and three leaves is greater than the danger in attempting a TP.

The vital turn in John's suggested tactic is the second break: if the 1-back peel on partner is not completed, then either a fifth break or the concession of a contact will be needed to win. The canny opponent facing the suggested approach might try cornering instead of taking the first of the 35 yard shots. This makes the crucial second turn supremely difficult. How certain is John Portwood of picking up the break, peeling partner at 2 (still only a 3 ball break remember), picking-up the ball in 4th corner (presumably at 4), and constructing the leave after 6? Most experts would like to have the balls for the cross-wiring at 1 pretty much in place before 5 - a tall order in these circumstances.

More importantly, John has missed the essential point about why we play croquet. It is not to win at any cost - to grind your opponent into the ground. Experts regularly finish with peeling breaks because these are a stylish way to win - the sign of playing with flair. In the modern game, one cannot reach the top by care and safety alone - one has to actively win games rather than playing to avoid losing them!

There are legitimate '1-back' tactics, as Wylie describes, but they are somewhat more adventurous than those John Portwood offers. Even so, I cannot recall anyone trying them against me. Was Solomon wrong when he wrote that 'the trademark of the expert and the ambition of most up-and-coming croquet players is the triple peel'? I doubt it. Martin French,
Ipswich.

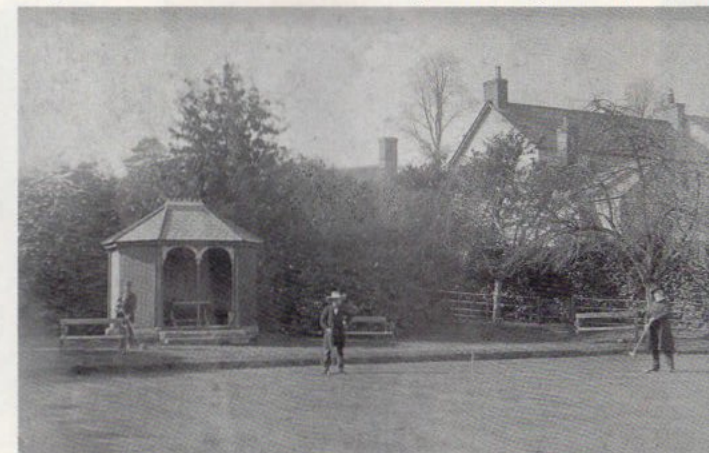
Dear Sir,

Having just read John Portwood's article on 'the end of the triple peel' I felt it necessary to put pen to paper.

Anyone with serious ambitions must be prepared to practise and attempt the triple peel even if it means failure is encountered. At the very highest level the ability to win matches depends a lot on the ability to do triples. If the President's Cup is taken as an example, the number of triples done in this competition has increased enormously of late, where it is almost expected you need to complete a triple to win.

Anyway, returning to John Portwood's article, I believe there are several weaknesses in it. Firstly and probably one of the most important points is, by his method you give the 'A' class player 3 shots, compared to 1 if you do or go for the triple. Surely Mr Portwood recognises that his diagram C is one of the leaves that is widely used for the triple anyway, so distance in his argument is irrelevant. Maybe he is also very good at cross-wiring because he relies on being able to achieve such positions twice.

Finally returning to diagram C, let us call it the 'common' lift leave or 'diagonal spread'. Should the opponent hit this leave it would be much easier for him to go around and peg out the opponent, leaving Mr Portwood 'in a mess'. If you go to four-back with the first break and then the lift is hit, all except perhaps Mr TPO himself, would find greater difficulty in removing the opponent's ball from the game.



The croquet lawn at Halse House, in use at the end of the 14/18 War.

To finish I would like to ask you to ask yourself what your ambitions in croquet are. Would you be a Mr Portwood and probably win 50% of your games or would you like to master the 'TP' and become President's Cup Winner, the choice is yours? Remember though, 'The trade-mark of the EXPERT and ambition of most up-and-coming players is the triple peel' (John Solomon).

Mark Saurin,
Darwen.

Dear Sir,

I had to check I wasn't reading the April Fool edition on completing John Portwood's 'The End of the Triple Peel'. A system requiring a mere two cross wires and a perfect diagonal spread - I do hope he was merely flying a kite.

The first two leaves were of course the standard leave before lifts were introduced. The first has the merit that a four-ball break can generally be guaranteed even if the opponent finesses. That's if you can set it up satisfactorily

Is there a flaw in Diagram C? If blue is wired from black and hampered from yellow and red, surely it has wiring lift. That may give blue an attractive shot down the east boundary, or even from A-baulk, either of which may provide double targets.

Keith Wylie makes the important point in his 'Expert Croquet Tactics' that any leave should take account of the break opportunities it offers the opponent if they hit. Giving the opponent two shots, albeit of 35 yards, that offer him a laid break if he hits looks like carelessness, as Lady Bracknell would say. In pre-lift days one already had one ball to the peg, and the opponent's shot really was a last chance.

I hope I haven't been taken in by an early April 1st 'plant'. Whatever the verdict, I think I'll stick to chasing that elusive triple!

One other plea - could tournament secretaries make clear when returning acknowledgement slips whether

the entry is accepted or not? Some come back unmarked, and it requires a degree of guesswork based on the Calendar Details to ascertain whether one has to wait until the closing date for a guaranteed place. Simon Tuke,
London.

Croquet in Switzerland

Dear Sir,
Anyone passing through GENEVA this summer will be made very welcome at CERN CC. Please contact me beforehand if possible, otherwise on arrival (Tel + 41 (Switzerland) 22

Your Letters

767 3333 or, evenings/weekends + 33 (France) 50 41 21 87).

We now have two lawns, and 25 members ranging from handicap 7 upwards; low bisquers especially welcome.

Norman Eatough,
Chairman, CERN CC,
CERN, CH - 1211 Geneva 23,
Switzerland.

Missing Club

Dear Sir,
May I point out a sad omission on the map of East Anglia, page 21.

Between Hunstanton and Cromer at Wells is a small club with two small lawns which has been going since the early thirties. Triple peels may be unknown and four ball breaks a bit rare, but the members are keen and they should have been put on the map, I think under the category 'clubs with small lawns'.

George Chamberlin,
Leeds.

Halse House

Dear Sir,
I was intrigued to notice, in Issue 206, the photograph at the heading of 'Novembers' 'Garden Croquet News', a Summer House in the background.

It closely resembles the one at my old home, shown in the accompanying photograph. I inherited the property from an uncle whose uncle was the Dr. R.C.A. Prior, who was one of the Founder members of the All England Croquet Club.

In chapter 5 of Prichards' 'The History of Croquet', he refers to this croquet lawn at Halse House '...., the best in England!! When I lived at Halse in the late '20's, the Summer House was still in the field, which had reverted to a grass meadow. It was an octagon, with large doors and we had it moved nearer the house and I am not sure whether it is still there. The figure in the large hat is my uncle, Prior Goldney, and the other player is the local Rector Montgomery - cousin of General Montgomery of 8th Army fame.

To my shame, and due to the threat of the outbreak of the 39/45 War, I sold the Manor House and with it Richard Prior's collection of early - Pall Mall - mallets and other memorabilia. Little did I realise, at that age, how historically valuable they could be!!

A house is now built on the lawn and is called 'Mallets' at my suggestion.

Hugh Dunsterville,
Sutton Veny.

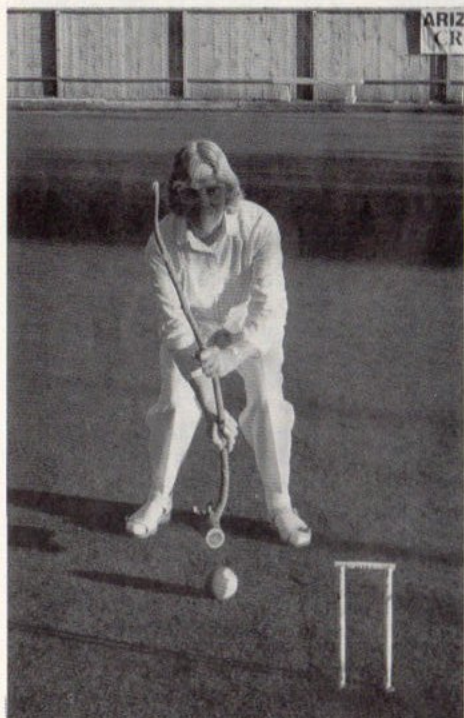
(Editor's Note: A biography of Dr A.C. Prior, one of the founder members of the All-England Club, can be found in 'Croquet' Issue 204, page 19).

Croquet in the Desert

By Margaret Green

We have all heard it before, 'I'm giving up croquet.' That is just what happened to me last September! A Christmas letter came from an American friend who had recently moved from San Francisco, (just before the earthquake) to Phoenix Arizona. Their new home had a desert garden and with professional help from the Arizona Croquet Club they had three large eucalyptus trees removed and a croquet lawn laid. 'I give up the game every week', my friend said. 'You really must come back to the States and come and visit us in Phoenix.' This led to my husband John and myself entering the Arizona Open Tournament 1990, playing the USCA rules game.

The Arizona Croquet Club in Phoenix play the International CA rules as well as the USCA game. The club does not own any croquet lawns but uses three lawns in private gardens on an affable and flexible arrangement. Our hosts' lawn was one of these. Two further lawns were leased in condominiums thirty miles apart and two lawns in a palatial hotel on the Camel Back Mountain were used. The mountain dominates Phoenix and reflects the varying lights of sunrise to sunset changing from a deep regal purple to crimson and gold. The mountain has sparse vegetation except for the Saguaro Cactus which grow as high as forty feet. It is the official flower of Arizona and the logo of the Arizona Croquet Club.



No wonder I didn't win!

The temperatures when we arrived were unusually low with a frost at night and day temperatures of 70 degrees F. The huge logs sawn from the eucalyptus trees were burned in a very large stove until about 11 am. We then ventured out to play croquet in the garden. The rest of our three week stay was in temperatures 80 to 90 degrees F. Phoenix has only 5 inches of rain a year, with virtually no humidity. From May to October the temperatures rise to over 100 sometimes reaching 120 degrees F.

Phoenix was, and still is in parts, a living desert. The Indian tribes constructed canals and the settlers extended them. Citrus fruit farms were established. When the developers built their homes, the citrus fruit trees were retained where possible. So many of the front gardens still contain

these shapely trees, sometimes more than a dozen, in neat rows, with their trunks painted white to reflect the strong heat of the sun. It was a joy to pick from the garden fresh grapefruit for breakfast every morning, and to squeeze a dozen oranges for their juice. Lemons too were in abundance but due to the drop in temperature at night banana plants could not survive in this region. Many Arizonians deplore green lawns and their gardens remained desert with a variety of cacti. The area in which we stayed was aptly called Arcadia.

One of the reasons our hosts chose their house was because the existing desert garden could be made into a croquet lawn and the house was on the irrigation system. A narrow canal runs in front of some of the houses and approximately every two weeks, they read a register which is posted on a lamp-post to find out when their supply of irrigation water will be available. At the specified date and time, the occupiers on the scheme open a valve which enables the water to pass from the canal to flood their gardens. After four hours the croquet lawn is ready for use again. Our friends were fortunate to be at the end of the irrigation supply so they could sometimes get extra water if their neighbours did not want it. The house had domestic metered water but they never seemed to economise. During the Arizona Open Tournament our friends could not make use of the irrigation water because of the timing, so the sprinkler system was used from the domestic supply.

Our friends started work on their new croquet lawn in September. The soil was graded and prepared and the water sprinkler system installed. Bermuda grass seed was sown but this lays dormant in the late fall. Just as it was ready to grow the lawn was over-seeded with winter-ripe grass seed. When this seed had grown the grass has to be cut down by degrees. Within five months of being desert the croquet lawn was ready for use.



'The Flipper of the Flaps' and John timing!

A useful attractive pavilion was built called a 'palapas', the name deriving from a Spanish word. It is an open sided cool shady shelter with a palm frond thatched roof. A Mexican tiled floor was laid and a new pine kitchen sink unit was installed together with a large fridge/freezer to hold the constant stock of cold drinks supplied by the club. Electric lighting was installed and chairs were made available. It was a pretty picture looking across the

length of the croquet lawn towards the palm-fronted palapas and the citrus fruit trees, beyond which the Camel Back Mountain towered, appearing in the clear air as if it was just a stone's throw away.

The entrance fee for the Arizona Open Tournament was \$180 each. This included two cocktail parties, one of which was held in our hosts' lovely open-plan home on the eve of the tournament. The other was held at the end of the tournament in another member's elegant home which reminded us of the Brighton Royal Pavilion as a huge dome covered the lounge. The previous owner had the house built to this design so that he could recognise his property when flying his 'plane home. Also included in the fees were daily, tasty lunch boxes, and on the Finals Day at the hotel we all sat down to an open-air brunch which was situated at the side of the croquet lawn and a swimming pool. The hotel was an opulent complex containing six tiered warm open-air swimming pools of various shapes and facilities. The largest pool was lined with mother of pearl, there were very many water falls and various fountains. It was an oasis in the desert. The hotel also had an eighteen hole golf course and ten tennis courts with an automated practice court.

The Singles matches were a modified Round Robin format and the Doubles a double elimination format, all with level play. The members were divided into three groups. In Flight 1 players with USCA handicaps of 0, 1, and 2 were placed, in Flight 2 were players with handicaps of 3, 4, and 5, while all other handicaps were in Flight 3. Standard lift was played, not from the baulk lines, but contact with a ball.

Both John and I had played the USCA wicket game two years ago in the San Francisco Open Tournament. This was where we met our delightful hosts. It was lovely to meet half a dozen of these San Francisco members again here in Arizona. The

Minnesota has long severe winters from October to April. Temperatures are 20 degrees F at the end of November to the end of February. Lewis, my doubles partner, experimented, firstly sweeping snow from the three foot thick ice that had formed on the lake. He drilled holes in the ice to sink the hoop carrots, and because the sun and friction melted the ice around the hoops he secured them in with wooden wedges.

His next occupation was to design plastic pucks. He started with two inch deep pucks, then he tried one inch deep concave pucks. Still not satisfied with their efficiency he tried one inch deep flat pucks and eventually weighted these in the centre with steel. To play croquet on ice, ordinary warm shoes are worn and normal standard mallets are used. So Lewis who only a few days earlier had been playing croquet on ice in Minnesota was now playing croquet in the desert in Arizona with a partner from wet and windy England. What a contrast!

Lewis loaned us a video of a game on ice played with his equipment. It was the same as the game played on grass except pucks were used instead of balls. Lewis also designed sprung hoop clips that do not break. The Americans we met were very innovative. Many of the participants had made their own mallets. Wayne Rodoni from San Francisco was a beginner like us when we first met him two years ago. Now he was a USCA handicap of 0 and last year won \$700 playing croquet. He became the Champion of Champions at the Arizona Open. He is now a hot contender for the Solomon Trophy American team next year. Wayne had made his own mallet. The head was made from aluminium (aluminum as they like to call it). The sheet

other 48 contenders came from varying parts of the United States necessitating travelling there by air for most of them, just like ourselves from Southwick.

Arizona C.C. play both the International C.A. game as well as the USCA game. San Francisco however only play the USCA game. The Arizonians seem to favour teaching beginners the International CA game first, and later to teach them the

USCA game, as it is far more complicated. The American game would be very difficult to play without a deadness board. Someone usually offers to take charge of this apparatus, relieving the players of this duty of flipping the flaps.

Each participant was given a croquet bag with the Arizona logo emblazoned on the side. Inside the bag were schedules from which each player could determine where and when his next game would take place. It was the responsibility of each player to find transport if needed, between the various courts. Each participant also received a quartz timer. The games were timed for one and a half hours each, with 45 seconds a shot. During the game someone would call '15 seconds', and you then knew that a stroke had to be made right away. As some of the games were double banked 'Time out' had to be called, otherwise your turn would end waiting for the other players to clear the area you wanted to use. A few players opted out of this 45 second shot, while others applied it as psychological pressure on the opponent.

Both John and I won a singles game each and I won with my partner three doubles games. My doubles partner was Lewis McGonagle from Gull Lake Croquet Club, Minnesota. With his wife Vivian as President, and son, they own and run a small engineering business of about forty employees. One of his production lines is making complete sets, and individual items, of croquet equipment under the name of 'Croquet America'. Their balls are solid plastic and do not distort or swell in hot sunshine, an important factor in America. It is reputed that Jaques balls are expensive and that they distort in hot sunshine. Townsends' water filled balls are not effective in some strokes. Barlow balls however were preferred by the Americans, but most clubs would not buy them because they are made in South Africa and they refuse to trade with that country until apartheid is dismantled. We played with Dawson balls in Arizona as they find them efficient, cheaper and longer lasting.

Throughout our holiday we were very conscious of the strange bird songs. We saw humming birds which are always attracted to the colour red. For their benefit, our hostess had a red drink container suspended from an orange tree. There were ground doves, blue winged blackbirds, quails and woodpeckers that clickety clicked all day long from a neighbouring palm tree as if mocking the sound of our mallets and balls clattering together. Arizona has 15 species of rattle snakes. Thankfully, unlike the woodpeckers, we never heard or saw them but our hosts actually had the end of a rattle snake's tail and it rattled quite audibly.

Three days before we were due to fly home we decided to take a day tour of the Grand Canyon. The journey was made in a 14 seater coach and took nearly five hours. We left Phoenix in temperatures of 85 degrees F and arrived at the Grand Canyon in a snow storm and never saw a thing. The mules that were used to descend into the depths of the canyon, carrying riders on the seven hour trek, stood in the fields like statues, motionless amidst the swirling snow. The hikers were drying their socks and warming their toes before a huge log fire burning in a large open grate in the tourist centre. We viewed a small museum and were directed to an Imak cinema that had a massive curved screen. We swayed in our seats as we were hurried on a raft down the Colorado River gorging its way through the Canyon. We shot the rapids in a small craft, and flew in an aeroplane, just missing by a hair's breadth the steep sides of the Canyon's walls. It was quite a thrill. We took the return journey home much earlier than expected. The snow ploughs had cleared the roads but a sheet of ice formed a film

over the surface. We passed a casualty - a car had slithered onto its roof. As we descended from 7,000 feet above sea level the snow gradually disappeared and we were thankful to be back into warm temperatures again. We now have an excuse to return to Arizona, but more than that we love the Americans; they are so friendly, hospitable and open. It was so pleasant to renew acquaintances with so many croquet players whom we had met two years ago on our trip to San Francisco. Once again we met Neil Spooner who was also competing in the Arizona Open. He won 8,000 dollars in 1989 playing croquet, and was top of the league. Our Mark Avery was 4th in the league winning 4,000 dollars while Wayne Rodoni the Arizona Champion of Champions came 17th, in the league. We are sure he will soon reach the top of the ladder.

With all the money to be made, and prizes to be won in the CA magazine for the best photograph and short story, perhaps one day they will award a prize for the best travel article. Maybe I will not give up the game of croquet yet awhile and persevere a little longer.



It's nice to play on ice!

aluminium was weighted at either end of the head which was longer and narrower than the standard head. Another participant from Kentucky had made a complete plastic head for his mallet while an Arizonian extolled the virtues of his Walker mallet. Yet another player whom we had previously met in San Francisco and was from the Beverley Hills Club plays many shots one handed with a short shafted mallet. He is a champion Roque player. Perhaps the smartest mallet I saw had been made by a player from Seattle - it was made of Lignum Vitae and bound with brass. Needless to say mallets were a great topic of conversation.

THE CROQUET CLASSIC
4th Year!

If your club is going to run a recruitment drive this year, why not enter your beginners for the Croquet Classic, and provide them with some enjoyable competition? Anyone who has never had a handicap of 18 or less can enter.

Beginners' group competitions can be organised in any way to suit the players, provided the winner plays at least three games to win the competition. The winner then goes through to the relevant round of the National competition.

By adding a supplement to your charge for beginners' coaching, you can easily cover the £25 Group Entry fee (minimum 4 players).

Group Entry Forms, which should be returned no later than 31st May, can be obtained from Chris Hudson. Tel: 0270-820296.

This competition works wonders in maintaining the enthusiasm of new members. Try it and see!

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Early Days

Diagnosis and Cure in 1906/7

By Allen Parker (Parkstone)

Why People Do Not Improve

The following article by the Editor appeared in the *Croquet Gazette* dated 2nd August 1906. Apart from its reference to the 'dead ball' (which was relevant in the sequence game then played), the advice it gives is still pertinent to-day.

In one of the Spring numbers of the *Gazette* we commented on the comparatively small improvement (as shown by the handicap tables) made by the high-bisqued players, and undertook on some future occasion to endeavour to account for it. That occasion - in the absence of the usual Summer pressure on our space - has now arisen, and we take the opportunity of propounding our theories on the causes of what is clearly a lamentable fact.



Rev. Clement Powell (Champion of England 1898), who used the *Golf style*.

In many cases, no doubt, the absence of improvement is merely due to the absence of play. For instance, a man plays for the first time in his own local tournament, receives a handicap which probably does not err in the direction of leniency, and, beyond a little garden party croquet, does not play the game seriously till his annual tournament comes round again. Under such conditions he is, of course, not very likely to reduce his handicap; for, even though he may improve considerably, he gives the official handicapper no opportunity of learning the improvement and altering his bisques.

But we are chiefly concerned with that large number of high-bisqued players who do play frequently in tournaments and elsewhere, and yet do not seem to improve to any great extent. What is the cause of this? Not lack of talent, for croquet is, up to a certain point, the easiest of all games. We can think of only two causes, viz. (1) want of practice, and (2) want of intelligent originality.

By practice we mean real practice as opposed to actual play; and not merely break practice, but practice in individual strokes, one at a time; choosing for preference strokes in which one is consciously weak, or new strokes which one has seen made in a tournament. Many times in the course of a season does the scratch player show his weaker partner what can be done with a corner cannon, and, still more important, how to play in

order to obtain that corner cannon. And the weaker partner is enraptured with the possibilities of the stroke and says 'I must remember that, and practise it when I get home'. But she doesn't, and forgets all about it, and has to be taught it all over again next year, when it comes as a complete novelty. Such players do not improve.

The second cause we called 'Want of intelligent originality'. So many players get into a groove which they never attempt to leave. They have two ideas in croquet; to make a break, and to lay a break, and they always make them and lay them in precisely the same way; that is, they leave their partner with a rush on the dead ball to his next hoop (which is nearly always wrong), and play their final position for that hoop (which again is nearly always wrong). In addition perhaps, towards the end of a turn, when it is much too late, they begin to think of wiring. Wiring at the end of an all-round four-ball break should be thought of and arranged for before the fifth hoop is made.

We recommend to such players, that they should practise different ways of making 4-ball breaks, not always sending the next player to the blue hoop, but allowing its destination to depend on the final scheme of wiring, which should not always be the same. It is rather interesting to try to wire a ball at a spot where it has never been wired before. And always before approaching a hoop - better still, before making the preliminary roquet - the player should ask himself, 'Do I want any rush on this ball when the point is made?'. If so, let him utilise the three strokes allowed him to obtain it in. In this way much may be done towards the perfecting of the break, by bringing in the fourth ball, or adjusting the positions of any balls which are not perfectly placed. Above all, beware of the 'centre-ball' fallacy. The centre ball is not a fixture, but it is a moveable object to be placed in whatever position will make the break easiest. How often does our partner ask, 'Send Red to the centre, I suppose, and try to get a rush on Blue to your hoop?'. To which we reply, 'Get a rush on Blue to your hoop, and let Red go where it likes'. Take care of the next point in order, and the remainder of the break will take care of itself. That is the real secret of break-making before the break is fully established. Let the first hoop be easy and the rest will follow; because any easy approach to a hoop means subsequent command over rushes, and consequently command of the break. If, on the other hand, when the break is difficult, you try for too much - e.g. the stereotyped plan of sending a ball to the next hoop but one, and the other to the 'magic' centre - you will probably not make a point at all. Most games are lost in this way.

We offer these few hints especially to the player whose handicap exceeds 8, and are convinced that all such players could, with a week or two of the kind of practice recommended, improve their game to the extent of at least two bisques.

How to Improve One's Game

The following article appeared in the *Croquet Gazette* of 19th December, 1907. In its references to the recommended styles of play, it should be noted that Cyril Corbally swung the mallet between the legs (quite unacceptable for ladies at that time), and used the 'Irish Grip', ie, hands together or interlocked with palms facing forward. What the article calls the Beaton-Fawcett-Rowley-Woolston style was what we now call the 'Side Style', viz, mallet swung at the side but body facing forward. In those days this was called the 'Front Style', in contrast to the 'Golf Style', which, to add to the confusion, used to be called the 'Side Style'.

I take it that this is what a great many people want to know, and as I have done so very much myself during the last year or two, perhaps some of the readers of the *Gazette* may be interested during the dead season to have some tips that they

can look into.



Mr C.E. Willis (Champion of England 1897), whose style was unique.

I have been much struck in looking at some people playing in tournaments to see the various haphazard ways in which they play. I fancy there are hardly any, out of the whole lot of players, who play in the same identical style. Of course, I am referring to a player's whole attitude and style when playing. From what I have noticed about much of the play I have seen, I have often wondered if most players really play after a fashion that they have found out by experience is the best, and I am inclined to think that even among strong players there are those who have not educated themselves to any style of play that they have found to be least infallible. I don't doubt that the very best play on a thoroughly approved and tried method, but I doubt it of the host of mediocrities. I can say for myself that until I had reason to adopt a certain attitude of style and playing that I felt suited me, and stuck to it, and what is more, had a mallet made from exact specifications to suit, my game was always liable to extremes of erraticism and uncertainty. Now I can say this, that there is a certainty about it in its own way; that when it goes wrong I can invariably accuse myself of a departure from one or more of the precepts of my approved and adopted style. I am, of course, speaking of ordinary days, as I believe the days of being quite off and everything going wrong are much the exception and not the rule.

Croquet is in a sense an easy game to play well, but how to do it with consistency is evidently a great trouble to many. The game may be defined as one of placing a ball or balls in a desired direction or directions within an area of 35 by 28 yards. Accuracy is required, and accuracy can be attained by attention to rules which each player can frame for himself or herself, if he or she would only do so. I wonder, for instance, how many players there are who, when they have to do the most ordinary of all things at croquet - namely, make a roquet - make a point of walking up and approaching their ball from behind, and looking down the line of aim? The target is almost two balls in breadth, and yet, notwithstanding, it is astonishing how balls are missed at 5 yards' distance or less. When it is a case of very long shooting, I do not think that human agency has any more to do with a hit or a miss than the element of chance which pervades all games of skill; but I do say this, that a roquet up to 10 yards'

distance should be a certainty. When such is missed there is something wrong which should be seen to at once. I continue with this common case of a roquet to be made, and I offer my advice to the host of players who miss short or medium roquets, to walk up to their ball from behind and take in at once the line of aim. This can be done at first and retained till the stroke is played, in a way that no other glances can supply. As they address themselves to their ball I ask them to consider how they are balancing themselves, and if they don't quite know I advise them to try to find out as soon as possible on which foot to stand. I have found out by experience that a proper balance is essential to accuracy. Some will find that balancing themselves on the right foot is better than on the left, or that an equal balance on both feet is ideal. When the line of aim has been got and the proper balance of the body adjusted, the next thing to attend to is the actual stroke, and this is important part of the performance depends largely for results on where and



Cyril Corbally demonstrates the use of the Irish grip. Corbally was considered by his contemporaries to be the supreme player of his generation, winning the Open Championship at his first attempt in 1902.

how the mallet is held. All I need to say about this is that any player can ascertain very easily where is the exact place for one's hands on the handle of the mallet which gives it the best wield, and the firmness with which it should be held. Players should have their mallets with handles to suit their holding, and of covering material that is pleasant to use, and they should accustom themselves to a firmness of holding that admits of no wavering. Hard hitting is best. Most good players hit hard. My precepts are therefore:-

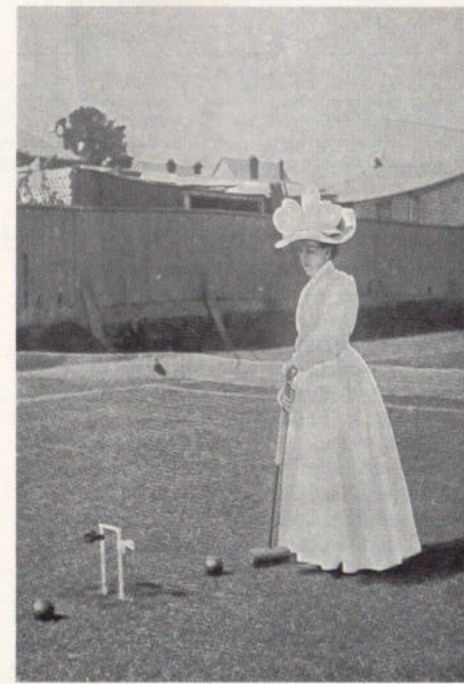
- 1st. Walk up and look at your ball from behind and down the line of aim.
- 2nd. Balance yourself in your approved fashion.
- 3rd. Hold your mallet properly and in the right place.
- 4th. Swing it truly and firmly, which you will most likely do if your hold it properly.
- 5th. Remember all these things always at the right moment.

Having dealt with the commonest of strokes - namely, the roquet - I should say that the precepts I have laid down are equally applicable to the also somewhat common occurrence of finding oneself in front of a hoop to be made from varying distances. It is, of course, a great deal more difficult

to run a hoop from the same distance than to make a roquet, and one's precepts must be rigidly enforced where the stroke is a difficult one.

Of what general style to adopt I do not attempt to write with anything of the same confidence. I have tried most styles, and believe that they can severally be brought to an almost perfection of accuracy by attention to details, varying according to the style. I can, however, honestly recommend my own with my precepts, which fit together, and I can also say that when I fail I have forgotten some or all of them. I also recommend my style of play because it is played by the best and, I think, the most. I call it the Beaton-Fawcett-Rowley-Woolston style, with little necessary adjustments - all made advisedly - here and there, to suit one's particular fancies: or I might call it a combine of what I have found is best in the style of most of the very best men and women players and their following far and near. Of the other front style - of the Corbally school - this is only available to men, and while I believe great accuracy can be attained by it, I also believe it is difficult to learn. Its exponent has many disciples, but, with a very few exceptions, they follow him afar off. Let those, however, who play it pay as much attention to such things as the placing of their feet when playing, and the hold of their mallet, as Mr Corbally apparently does. The side, or golf stroke, I have also tried, and to those who play it and would like to improve, my advice is - drop it like a hot potato. No accuracy can be ensured by it in comparison with front play, for obvious and glaring reasons. If they must play from the side let them consider the ways of the person, whether male or female, who begins to address their ball by spreading himself or herself out as much as possible, as apparently a necessary move for looking along the line of aim, which they take care to do as best they can. The only other style I can think of is that of the champion of style, but my name is not Willis, and I am afraid that there is something in it that no-one but Mr Willis understands. After all, there is nothing that will compare with the ways of the honest man or woman who can look you in the front - no sly furtive glances or side looks here - and straight dealings are the result.

I have left tactics - as they are called - alone, because they will not win you a game unless and until you get an innings. I have helped myself to many an innings by strict attention to my precepts,



Miss Chester (Winner of the Gold Medal, 1899), pictured using the *Front style*.

Early Days

or such details of which I have written that are so often overlooked; and if these little things are insisted on and attended to at the right time, depend upon it that sooner or later they will bring their reward at a pinch, when all depends on a hit or a miss, and in a permanent and higher standard of play generally.

Croquet at the National Garden Festival, Gateshead

Report by Eamonn O'Sullivan

The 1990 National Garden Festival is based in Gateshead and is set to become the biggest single visitor attraction in Europe this year, targeted at attracting in excess of four million visitors through the Festival Gates. Open for 157 continuous days from May 18th until October 21st, the visitor can expect a feast of spectacular fun and entertainment; indeed more than 60 different special events will be held every single day.

The Events Programme will be an integral part of this year's National Garden Festival on a scale that has never been seen before in the U.K. In all, it is anticipated that over 90,000 participants will entertain and excite the visiting public. The action packed programme has been devised to appeal to all tastes and age groups and will incorporate sport, music and the arts, displays and demonstrations and many water based activities.

Several high quality venues have been established on the 200 acre site including an Amphitheatre, a covered arena and a full size cricket field complete with artificial wicket. The sporting programme will be spread throughout the Festival and encompasses all age ranges and abilities. At the high-profile level, the list of participants reads like a 'Who's Who' in the sporting world. Coupled with this, the Festival will play host to a series of tournaments providing a semi-serious competitive edge to the programme with National and International teams participating. Finally the visitor will be introduced to sports and games that he/she would not normally encounter as the Festival organisers have arranged a series of 'hands on' activities which is aimed at introducing new people to sporting activities.

The Green, with its sophisticated surroundings and village style setting, will provide the base for a series of high class Croquet Events. Four Sundays have been allocated to stage heats that will act as qualifiers for the Northern Regional Final. The Phileas Fogg Croquet Championship, as staged by Derwent Valley Foods, will take place on Sunday 26th August 1990. Qualifiers will have battled through the regional heats which take place on June 3rd, June 24th, July 15th, and August 5th. Application forms are available from NGF 90 (Gateshead) Ltd, Events Department, Queensway North, Team Valley Trading Estate, Gateshead, NE11 0NG.

Did you receive your March Issue of 'CROQUET' (No. 208)?

About 30 copies of the March issue have been returned to us by the Post Office as there were no labels on the envelope.

Either our distributor has erred, or the labels have become detached.

If you have not received your March issue, please contact Brian Macmillan who will send you a replacement.

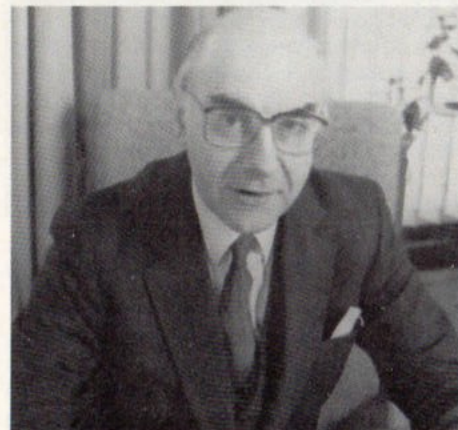
1989 Accounts

The Treasurer's Commentary on the 1989 Accounts

There has been a welcome increase in the Association's ordinary income partly as a result of the increased membership and the higher subscription rates and partly as a result of greater awareness of croquet by the public leading to greatly increased sales of our publications.

We have managed to contain our 'general overheads' expenditure within a modest increase even though the initial cost of a small computer installation in the CA office has been incurred. The cost of our principal publications, in particular the magazine, has however given cause for concern and steps have been taken to prevent any further increase in this item for 1990.

The emergence of an overall surplus on ordinary activities a year ahead of the target date is very gratifying but I must issue a warning about future administrative costs. The greater range of the Association's activities and involvement with other bodies - the Sports Council, sponsors of international events and HM Customs to name but a few - has led to a greatly increased workload on the Association's administration at all levels. The extent of this work is sometimes such that it can no longer properly be carried out without the devotion of so much time that the enthusiasm of the individual concerned is destroyed within a year or two; but I think that some recompense for the unattractive aspects of these tasks, viz. the routine and time absorbing parts, can possibly be made by the award of suitable honoraria to those willing to undertake these duties. I do not see how continued development of the Association's activities can take place without some quite significant expenditure on these lines.



Alan Oldham.

Publicity and development activities entailed a gross outlay of £60,000 in 1989 but were largely funded by the Sports Council and by sponsorship. The latter took two forms: firstly, a cash grant from the Royal Bank of Scotland for the development of croquet in schools; and, secondly, the provision of airline tickets by Continental Airlines which enabled us to stage the World Croquet Championships in July and to send our team to New Zealand for the MacRobertson Test Matches in January 1990 without the need to raise additional money from Associates.

Expenditure on coaching during the year was nearly £6,500 and included the purchase of a high quality camera for the production of coaching videos. The coaching programme currently generates income of over £3000 per annum from fees and may soon become self-supporting.

A grant of £50 was made during the year to help the start of the South Derbyshire Club and grants of £250 each were made to the West Midlands, East Midlands, South Eastern, and Southern Croquet Federations. The 1989 expenditure

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS AS AT 31st DECEMBER 1989

FIXED ASSETS	1988	
Office Furniture and Equipment at Written Down Value	1,789	934
Croquet Equipment at Written Down Value	1,600	1,600
Trophies, estimated to realise	10,000	10,000
Investments, as per attached schedule	27,310	34,163
	40,699	46,697
CURRENT ASSETS		
Stocks of Literature and Equipment	1,800	1,218
Loans to Member Clubs	3,400	4,000
Sundry Debtors and Prepayments	6,179	2,564
Cash at Bank and in Hand	3,794	6,998
	15,173	14,780
	55,872	61,477
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Subscriptions received in advance	4,665	3,826
Accrued Expenses	16,969	15,081
Taxation	307	753
	21,941	19,660
NET ASSETS	£33,931	£41,817
Representing:		
Accumulated General Funds as at 1st January 1989	24,717	29,997
Transfer to Club Development Fund	(200)	(1,050)
Deficit for the Year	(7,991)	(4,230)
	16,526	24,717
OTHER FUNDS		
Life Membership	1,640	1,640
Apps-Hepley Memorial	216	216
Test Tour	2,734	3,471
Benefactors	8,694	8,152
Tournaments and Trophies	2,871	2,571
Club Development	1,250	1,050
	£33,931	£41,817

Signed: M. MURRAY, Chairman of Council
A.J. OLDHAM, Hon. Treasurer

INVESTMENTS HELD AT 31st DECEMBER 1989

Nominal Value		Market Value
£		£
18,817.92	QUOTED INVESTMENTS 10% Treasury Stock 1990	20,000
10.00	UNQUOTED INVESTMENTS Roehampton Country Club Nationwide Building Society	10 7,300
		<u>£27,310</u>

A shareholder of Roehampton County Club has sold at a value of £2,000 per share his very substantial holding. However in view of the size of that holding it cannot be taken as an indication of the value of this Association's investment.

budget had provided for a further £200 in grants to help start clubs but as this was not taken up an equal amount has been transferred to the Club Development Fund - the 'Four Lawn' Fund. Loans which had been made to three clubs were repaid during the year and a short term loan of £400 was made to the Shrewsbury Club.

£3,000 was spent on publicity during the year including £800 in respect to the World Croquet Championships. Expenditure on international development amounted to about £2,000 and included £540 fees to the World Croquet Federation and special costs arising from the World Championships and the visit of players from Japan. Miscellaneous development costs included the Schools programme (£3,500 gross) and the Garden Classic Tournament (£1,400 net). Expenditure on the provision of the second indoor carpet and ancillary equipment has been largely covered by a special Sports Council grant

and donations.

The totality of the development activities of the Association during the year resulted in a deficit of about £10,000 leading to the overall deficit of £7,991 shown in the accounts. This figure however needs to be put into the context of what has been achieved in the five years, 1985-1989, during which the Association has been operating its Forward Plans with the assistance of the Sports Council. If the five years are taken together, adding surpluses and subtracting deficits, the cumulative deficit only amounts to £3,500. In that period about £150,000 of grant aid from the Sports Council and over £70,000 of sponsorship has been put into croquet, £13,000 in the form of direct grants to clubs and federations.

Nevertheless the Association's General Funds are some £5,000 lower than at the beginning of 1985 and therefore, with the likely need to provide for payments in future for some of the

1989 Accounts

Other Funds

	Life Membership	Apps-Heley Memorial	Test Tour	Benefactors	Tournaments & Trophies	Club Development
Balance at 1st January 1989	1,640	216	3,471	8,152	2,571	1,050
Add: Interest on Invested Funds	-	-	491	542	-	-
Donations From General Funds (Overheads)	-	-	6	-	-	-
	1,640	216	3,968	8,694	2,871	1,250
Deduct: Allocation in Year	-	-	1,234	-	-	-
Balance at 31st December 1989	£1,640	£216	£2,734	£8,694	£2,871	£1,250

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 1989

	1988	
INCOME		
Subscriptions	19,776	15,957
Registration Fees	2,802	2,411
Levy	5,659	4,584
Tribute	-	77
Sale of Books, Laws etc. (net)	7,815	4,347
Advertisements in Publications	4,357	4,511
Surplus on Tournaments	3,390	2,796
Investment Income on General Funds (net of tax)	2,385	2,127
	46,184	36,810
EXPENSES		
Publications (Magazine, Fixtures Book and Directory)	21,161	18,228
	25,023	18,582
GENERAL OVERHEADS		
Office Rent	1,560	1,440
Rent of Land	500	500
Staff Salaries and Pensions	12,625	12,543
Council and Committee Travelling Expenses	1,275	1,445
Postage and Telephone	1,985	1,590
Printing and Stationery	962	1,149
Insurance	375	490
Sundry Expenses	748	450
Accountancy Charges	1,275	1,025
Maintenance of Office, Furniture and Equipment	1,550	726
	22,855	21,358
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) ON ORDINARY ACTIVITIES	2,168	(2,776)
EXTRAORDINARY ITEMS		
Income		
Sports Council Grant	26,000	26,552
Sponsorship (net)	615	1,366
	26,615	27,918
Expenses		
Development Officer's Fees & Expenses	24,066	17,916
Grants to Clubs and Federations	1,050	100
Coaching (net)	3,197	5,251
General Publicity and Development (net)	8,461	6,105
	36,774	29,372
DEFICIT FOR THE YEAR	£(7,991)	£(4,230)

We have examined the books, vouchers and other records maintained by The Croquet Association for the year ended 31st December 1989 and obtained such further information as considered necessary. To the best of our knowledge and belief the Accounts give a true and fair view of the State of Affairs of the Association at 31st December 1989 and of the Deficit for the year ended on that date.

Alhambra House, 27 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0AU
9th March 1990

NICHOLASS, AMES & CO.
Chartered Accountants

voluntary work done for the Association also in mind, I have proposed to Council an increase in subscription rates effective from 1991 which will probably be slightly above the level of the rate of inflation.

The allocation of £1,234 from the Test Tour Fund during the year provided part of the initial expenses of our team for the MacRobertson Shield Matches. The major part of the cost of this tour has, as already mentioned, been met by sponsorship from Continental Airlines and the balance has come from a provision of £1,900 in the 1990 development budget, a further allocation of £750 from the Test Tour Fund in 1990 and contributions from members of the team.

The £300 addition to the Tournaments and Trophies Fund is a payment charged to 'overheads' in ordinary expenditure and is in lieu of an insurance premium. The fund exists primarily to replace trophies that may be stolen

or lost and to repair and renovate others.

Since the close of the year a legacy of £1,000 has been received from the estate of the late Gerald Williams and this has been placed in the Benefactors Fund.

Recent changes in the shareholding structure of the Roehampton Club Ltd have resulted in the shares acquiring a marketability which they had not previously possessed. Currently the price which it may be possible to obtain for the shares is greatly in excess of their value by reference solely to their current dividend yield and consequently consideration is being given to a disposal of the Association's small holding in these shares.

The demand for information by the Sports Council, HM Customs and others and the financial aspects of our Forward Plan continue to occupy a lot of the time of the Hon. Treasurer and I am therefore grateful for the assistance with this work

Official Business

New Associates

Welcome to the following new members....

Ms H.J. Smith (Belsay), Mrs D. Bennet (Bowdon)
Mrs M. Boardman (Bath), I.E. Storey (Cambridge)
G.B. Edgeler (Cheltenham), Mrs J. Orchard (Cheltenham),
Dr M. Ranshaw (Cheltenham), L.A.J. Bailey (Compton),
Miss J. Garner (Harrogate), A.C.M. Maitland (Hurlingham)
J. Smith (Kingston Maurward), G.F. Nixon (Nottingham)
Mrs D. Birrell (Parkstone), Mrs R. Callan (Parsons Green)
Dr A. Carey (Ramsgate), E. Carey (Ramsgate)
E.C. Cowan (Southport), Mrs M.A. Sweeney (Southport)
Mrs V. Dummer (Surbiton), R. Noble (Surbiton)
K. Smith (Winchester), J.A. Simon (Wrekin College)
S.P. Sharrock (Wrest Park), N.J. Cordingley, H.F. Harte
Mrs H.F. Harte, V. Howe, Mrs V. Howe, A.E. Sylvester,
D.E. Sylvester, Mrs M. Sylvester

Total: 31

Where are they now?

We have lost contact with the following members. Any information would be gratefully received by Brian Macmillan.

Sir Godfrey Style, Kt CBE
M. Carmichael · R.O. Havery
P.J.C. Hetherington · C.G. Bennett
B. Dolley · Miss K. Gaunt
D.E. Spear

COACHING COURSES

A few places are still available on the following courses.

Grade II (Intermediate)

Tyneside 13/14 May
Southwick 9/10 June
Wrest Park 23/24 June
Nottingham 7/ 8 July

Course Fee: £23, inclusive of VAT.

Grade III (Advanced)

Wrest Park 4/ 5 August
Course Fee: £27.75, inclusive of VAT.

All enquiries to: Bill Lamb, 5 Bondyke Close, Cottingham, N. Humberside, HU16 5ND. Tel: 0482-840739.

PLEASE NOTE

As from 6th May 1990
CA Office Telephone
Number will be

071-736-3148

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Leicester Croquet Club has moved from Victoria Park to Mowmacre Community & Sports Centre on the northern boundary of the city.

TOURNAMENT ACCOMMODATION

Tournament players looking for London accommodation might like to contact Mrs M. Hobbs, a member of the CA, to discuss possible arrangements. Her address is 46 Richmond Hill, Richmond, Surrey, TW10 6QX. Tel: 01-940 2110.

which has been given to me this year by Mrs Audrey Croker.

A.J. Oldham,
29th March, 1990.

Affiliate Membership

At their meeting on 17th March 1990, Council decided to introduce a new grade of 'Affiliate' membership, available only to members of registered clubs, for which the annual subscription in 1990 would be £1.25.

At the same time, Council confirmed that the club registration fee for 1990 be increased to the figure already agreed (see below).

Clubs are advised that where their registration fee is based on a per-capita charge for every club member who is not a CA Associate, the 'non-Associate' club members for whom the club supplies names and addresses will automatically become 'Affiliate' members of the Croquet Association in 1990, and eligible to receive the benefits of such membership.

Please note that there is no obligation on clubs to provide names and addresses, but there are advantages to their club members if they do so. The lists of names supplied by registered clubs will not be given or divulged to any other organisation, in accordance with the undertaking given by the CA to the Data Protection Registrar.

On receipt of the names and addresses, the CA will send to all non-Associates a CA 'Affiliate' card. This will entitle the 'Affiliate' to compete in the Golf Croquet events in the CA Calendar Fixtures which would otherwise only be open to 'Associates'. It will also enable the 'Affiliate' to obtain free or discounted entry to watch selected CA events where an entry fee is normally charged (for example, the World Championships at Hurlingham in September this year).

Registered clubs whose members are affiliated to the CA will be eligible to obtain Public Liability insurance through the Croquet Association for an annual premium of £20.00.

Registered Clubs may indicate on their list of CA 'Affiliates' which of them would like to sub-



Ivor and Richard Brand playing each other in the Handicap Final at Budleigh Salterton.

scribe to 'Croquet News'. The 1990 annual subscription for four issues of 'Croquet News' will be £1.75 to 'Affiliates' (cover price £2.00). Copies of 'Croquet News' will be sent to individual Affiliates direct by the CA on receipt of the relevant names and subscriptions from their Clubs. Each new 'Affiliate' will receive a free introductory copy of 'Croquet News' on enrolment.

'Affiliates' will not be listed in the CA Directory, but will be hel on the CA computer and on club lists in the CA Office. Entries in the Directory will be confined to the other classes of membership as at present, known collectively as 'Associates'.

Any Club paying a fixed registration fee (for example, a school or a club in its first 3 years of existence) may opt to pay a fee based on the number of its 'affiliates' and become eligible to join the new scheme.

1990 Club Registration Fees

£1.25 per club member who is not a CA Associate (as defined below), with a minimum of £15.00. This fee is based on Club membership at 30th September, 1989, or at some other date convenient to the club, provided that the same date is used from year to year.

For new Clubs in the first 3 years of their existence and University Colleges, the 1990 Registration Fee is £15.00.

For Schools, the 1990 Registration Fee is £7.50, irrespective of the number of players.

1990 Registration Fees should normally be paid by Clubs by 1st May, 1990, but in view of the introduction of this new scheme, this date is extended to 1st June for 1990.

Note: 'Associate' membership of the CA covers the following categories of subscription: Standard, Veteran, Junior, Youth, Non-Tournament and Overseas.

Sidmouth wins Apps Heley Award

Report by Gwynneth Dart

Sidmouth plays its croquet within sight and sound of the sea and forms part of a Club (the Sidmouth Cricket, Tennis, Croquet and Hockey Club) which is proud to be one of the earliest Cricket Clubs in the country.

One of our lawns is beside the thatched Pavilion whose facilities are shared by all sections of the Club; the other 2 lawns are beyond the cricket field, and there we have our own small pavilion for shelter when the sea breezes blow too hard. Through the generosity of an anonymous

donor we shall this year have a shelter also at the seaward end of Lawn 3.

Adjacent to these lawns is the area presently used for practice, and plans are currently being made to level and upgrade it for use by next season as a 4th lawn. We are fortunate in our location and facilities, but it is the membership which makes a Club, and it is good to report that we are an active and friendly Club with a high proportion of coaches and referees who give throughout the season much time and effort, training and encouraging us towards a higher

standard of play.

There is a yearly waiting list and potential new members are invited to have a course of 6 lessons to introduce them to the game before committing themselves to membership, which has now passed the 100 mark. At the time of writing we have 22 C.A. members.

During last season we had a number of individual successes, not least of which was 'breaking the bank' at the Budleigh Open Tournament in May, with 4 club members winning all the cups; and 2 of our members reached the All-England area final at Bristol.

As a Club we took part in the Longman Cup and South West Feder-

ation matches, and hosted a Short Croquet Open Tournament and the Federation Golf Croquet Final. Within the Club there is each year a full programme of domestic tournaments, which all members are encouraged to enter.

Our present Chairman, Iris Dwerryhouse, (who has been a C.A. member since 1973) served the South West Federation in 1988 and 1989 as Tournament Secretary; she is also an official C.A. handicapper. Her untiring service to the Club within the framework of the C.A. is invaluable, and we are pleased and proud that it is in her current time of office as Chairman that the Apps Heley Award has come to Sidmouth.

Club News

Obituary

K.F.W. Townsend

Wolverhampton Croquet Club

It is with regret that I report the death of Ken Townsend.

I shall not dwell on sadness as this was not Ken's style, he would have wished you to pay your respects and then carry on living and live life to the full as he and his wife have done over the years.

It would fill the 'Croquet' to tell you of all his achievements and it is sufficient to say that he was a founder member of the Wolverhampton Croquet Club, the West Midlands Federation and the Wolverhampton Sports' Advisory Council and no mean maker of croquet equipment.

He and his wife, Fay, worked continuously to promote croquet, the game was close to his heart and as a sportsman in his youth he was always grateful that he had found a game to play in his latter years and one that could be enjoyed with his wife.

I first met Ken some eight years ago and without qualification, liked and respected him and then grew to admire him, not for his considerable achievements, but for what he was, a gentleman in every sense.

I shall, with others, remember Ken for his peculiar croquet stance and his odd tactics that were in true Cavalier style. Perhaps we would all enjoy our games if we adopted his fashion. His admiration, bordering on reverence, for the top class players tempered with consideration for the newcomer. His famous and perhaps his only croquet shot, the Wolverhampton Roll. If only Mr Solomon had been instructed by Ken, he would have appreciated how devastating it could be!

Above all these traits, I shall remember the affection of all of those who met him at tournaments. On enquiring what club I belonged to and replying Wolverhampton, the reply to me would be, 'Oh! Ken Townsend's Club'. Yes! With all due respect to fellow members, it was and always will be Ken Townsend's Club.

It was a pleasure to have met him and an honour to have been able to call him a friend. We shall all miss him. It only remains to say that our sympathy goes to his widow Fay and family.

T.P. Greenwood.



A Short Croquet tournament with Lawns 2 & 3 turned into 4 small lawns. Iris Dwerryhouse in play in the foreground.



Sidmouth players who won prizes at the Budleigh May Open Tournament (L to R): John Hatherley, Iris Dwerryhouse, Ted Owen, Mary Hardman, and Leslie Toye, with Sidmouth's main clubhouse in the background.

Obituary

Peter Kahn Lovitt Danks

Peter died on March 8th, peacefully, after a short illness, at home in Cambridge. Born April 19, 1914 in Essex, he spent his early childhood at Hampstead Garden Suburb, moving to St Leonard's on Sea in 1928. He attended Ascham St. Vincent's, Eastbourne, then the Brook House, Repton School, Derbyshire, from 1928-33, going on to read Law at Clare College, Cambridge.

He joined the Royal Artillery in 1939, returning after the war a major, having seen service in Madagascar and East Africa.

He undertook articles to become a solicitor, whilst building a mushroom farm with his own hands. Appointed Prosecuting Solicitor at Nottingham, he lived there for many years, firstly at the Park, then at Newstead Abbey. By this time he had become an active member of the Mushroom Growers' Association, becoming President in 1966/67. He had farms in Wiltshire and Wales.

He later became Prosecuting Solicitor for Southampton, and finally for Hampshire.

An excellent tennis player, he played at Junior Wimbledon, for Dorset, and later for Nottinghamshire veterans. He later focussed his attention on a large country garden in Wiltshire, and the laying out of a formal croquet lawn. He became an accomplished player.

Towards the end of his legal career he was the prime mover in establishment of the Prosecuting Solicitors' Society, in 1966, and was a committee member and secretary for several years. He was always a proponent of an Independent Prosecution Service and contributed to the debate over which form it should take.

On retirement, he took up croquet full time, at Budleigh Salterton, becoming a Croquet

Association Council member, accredited coach, and author of two books on how to play, now fast becoming authoritative sources on the subject. He later became the oldest Englishman ever to represent his country at a sport, croquet against Japan at Hurlingham.

Peter demonstrated a rare talent to approach a subject, carefully to analyse it, and then attack it until excellence had been achieved. He is sadly missed by his wife Sally, his family, and a large circle of friends.

J.C.L. Danks.

Peter Danks died recently in Cambridge; a loss which will be mourned by croquet players, particularly those in the South-West Region. He had been a member of the Budleigh Salterton Croquet Club for about ten years, and in that time he quickly established himself as one of its leading players. In his younger days he had been an extremely good tennis player but it was in croquet that he found the game which gave him scope to exercise his full talents. A solicitor by profession, he had a remarkable ability to analyse a situation, to prepare an appropriate, detailed scheme for action, and to carry it through effectively.

As Lawns Manager at Budleigh Salterton he initiated a long-term plan for the maintenance and improvement of the lawns. At a later stage he became interested in coaching beginners and, at a time when coaching was in a less well-organised state than it is now, he devised with the help of two or three other members a coherent and progressive scheme to introduce new members to the basic principles of croquet. Many players are indebted to Peter for the enthusiastic and encouraging way in which he introduced them to the game.

In 1987 Peter was appointed Regional Coaching Officer for the South West. He travelled extensively in the region and was especially helpful to newly-established clubs. His experiences led to the writing and publication of two books for beginners and improvers. The first book, 'Simply TEACH YOURSELF CROQUET' is extremely thorough with extensive guidance and information on all those points on which a beginner needs assistance.

Peter became a Council member of the Croquet Association, serving on the Coaching Committee. In addition he had a responsibility for publicity where he took on the uphill task of trying to interest sports editors of national newspapers in the reporting of croquet events. The 1989 World Championships exercised his talents not only in this sphere but also in a playing capacity. He represented England in one of the associated matches and is believed to be the oldest player to be selected to play for his country on his first appearance.

In 1989 he moved back to Cambridge to renew association with the town where he had graduated in law in pre-war days. He hoped to establish a croquet club there and to enjoy the many cultural and artistic amenities which Cambridge has to offer. Regrettably this was not to be. He underwent a serious operation last Autumn from which he never fully recovered. He leaves a widow Sally and an extended family to whom we offer our sincere condolences. His geniality and enthusiasm will be sadly missed by all his many friends.

D. Purdon.



Jane Garner receives the Haslam Short Croquet Singles Trophy from John McCullough.

York's Second Successful Season

Report by Margaret Garner

York Croquet Club finished its second year in style with a gala finals day on October 1st.

Our youthful club which started in April 1988 sauntered through its first year with about twenty members most of whom were new to the game.

In 1989 however, the pace quickened dramatically when the vastly experienced player and coach John McCullough joined us and together with Mike Haslam ran tuition courses which improved our game considerably. As our understanding increased so did our pleasure in playing the game.

We also acquired a new club site in Salisbury Road, an abandoned bowling green with an excellent surface giving us 1 full or 2 short croquet lawns.

We ended the season with more than forty members.

Younger members dominated the finals with Paul Froud, 24, winning the beginners tournament and Jane Garner, 19, taking the Short Croquet Singles Trophy.

The club was also involved, with some success, in the East Pennine League and the Yorkshire and Humberside Short Croquet League. We have Julian Tonks to thank for his sterling work in selecting and managing our league teams throughout the season.